

GREEK AND LATIN ANTHOLOGY

PART I GREEK MASTERPIECES

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INSCRIBED
TO
MY WIFE

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FOREWORD

My enterprise, I am aware is bold and needs an explanation Greek and Latin Masterpieces 'long since' were invited or condemned to be educational by their actual refinement, and as it were scientific precision, both in verse and prose. Ascertainment of thought especially in verse they became in schools its ordinary verbal instruments. A large proportion of educational minds even of fine quality using them have commonly failed to direct attention to the spirit, to pay homage to it. Education of the labouring classes though happily not in Scotland stopped short of Classics. In English education for the higher ranks formerly it was unusual to hear a Tutor even in colleges a Lecturer emphasize the grandeur of Æschylus elegance of Catullus or Virgil. I will hope that in these later days amendment has been made.

While the literary beauty of Greek and Latin authors, particularly in verse has been much neglected in education no such complaint applies to the language of books. Every important ancient writer has attracted a legion of writers to translate and comment with several remarkable exceptions. Not a few have enlisted the genius of illustrious English poets as translators. Some courage was needed to render anew into English verse choice

examples of bygone Classic inspiration: to wreath a single twentieth-century garland from some four and twenty gardens of Ancient Greek and Roman poesy.

I have devoted ten full years to my happy task. During a June week-end visit to my dear friend, F. St. John Thackeray, at his charming Mapledurham Parsonage, I challenged him to translate Virgil's lines. *I Æn.* vv. 459-63. On my return home, I put my version into the form to be found under the title "Wings" Part II. The attempt suggested to me a much more ambitious work, the present, which I hope to complete. My delightful companion survived too brief a time to know the progress of my plan. Later on I had the happiness to enjoy the sympathy and counsels—it is, I believe, I may boast, the commendation—of the fine scholar and wise thinker, Lord Bryce. Few could feel more the immense loss through his death than I.

Let me add that some translations in the present volumes have already appeared in publications by the firms of Messrs. Longman, and Messrs Fisher Unwin, and re-appear now with their goodwill.

HOMER

HOMER

c 962 r c

The boldest of all attempts at translation in any of its many forms is to subject the *Iliad* to the process. On the other hand it is one of the most natural. None surpasses the old Epic in interest and beauty and therefore it is a real privation that it should be closed to popular British intelligence. But the language in which it is written forbids for many direct study. To suppose that everybody to be free of its contents should learn Greek for the purpose is useless. An infinitesimal proportion of any nation has the opportunity to gain even a smattering of a dead language. If it had the result is of no practical importance, not to say enjoyment. More or less literal versions by good and sympathetic scholars help though they tantalize. They continually remind of the clamor of foreign verse to be rendered into the reader's tongue versified. The feeling on this side has been met as might be expected by a corresponding agreement on the part of writers. Verse translations have been abundant and after a large variety of styles May I while recognizing merit in most be allowed to say that the success is still too partial to preclude fresh attempts?

The only criticism which I do not so much fear as anticipate and accept, is that I have not expressed the full inspiration of my Author. I know that I have not, though it has not been for want of endeavour. For a mind of one age, religion, and race to reflect a thought born and developed in another is hard always. I, in particular, am content if I have given the impression of a fair creation, although often expanded.

This last, as an adverse criticism, I can accept without self-reproach. My metrical versions occupy more space than the originals. Obviously: otherwise, it had been vain to make the attempt. Greek and Latin in the first place are more completely developed from within than English. The interdependent economy of nerves, ligaments,—entire structure—is in advance of our own language. Room is saved everywhere, even in such common appendages as articles, cases, persons, often prepositions. When the translation is of thought,—of any period—in feeling, fashions, manners, learning, morals, religion—the demand for latitude in space is irresistible. Were my offence against a Classic no worse than dilution or dilatation, I could bear the charge lightly. I testify against myself to manifold worse sins, confusion of a Master's ethereal upstrokes and downstrokes. My conscience will be abundantly satisfied if withal I have helped a few to understand, as by an echo, something of the magic of Greek and Latin minstrelsy.

I have endeavoured to think the Poet's thought. I have not grudged space to reproduce Helen's review from Troy's Wall, for the King, of the array of Greek Princes. Still more fully I have let my readers hear how Hector and Andromache finally parted with the sweetest adieu bid by any wife and husband: how

Patroclus, after a life waiting on another's moods crowded into one day's chapter a whole independent career of triumph and tragedy, how Achilles in vengeance for the Shadow bestrides an entire battlefield, finally how old Priam royally shames all the victor's triumph by the grandeur of his pilgrimage to beg the body of a dead son.

Horace has said that even Homer sometimes nods. Never, as the national Poet in spirit Greeks were educated to feel and find at each name in every line significance. For us as for Horace some remind of nothing. As for them still for us the Iliad was and is a great portrait gallery a vast study in psychology. It is a miracle for the subtle discrimination in individual character. As the action proceeds depth and colour grow. For minor figures an epithet suffices. With principals according to their degree fresh traits perpetually become visible emphasized not transformed. The list is long. Gradually thus we see Achilles Agamemnon, Ulysses Ajax Hector Priam, Paris Helen Andromache Hecuba Cassandra yes even Gods and Goddesses Zeus, Pallas, Hera Iphigeneia Apollo Aphrodite Ares. Regard them as they reappear in later verse theology mythology. Homer's credit for introspection will not suffer. During the necessary halts in the working out of the heroic story in the scene shifting there will be a sudden flash of sunlight, illuminating warrior and period. Achilles plays on his harp, as envoys bring offers of a reconciliation he will fiercely reject. Agamemnon arms, at Diomedes suggestion, and bears himself as "The King" should in the fight. Diomedes and Glaucus lower their combative spears rather than violate the gracious sanctity of hereditary hospitality. Patroclus

THE ILIAD

Discontent long smouldering between the General King Agamemnon and Prince Achilles bursts into a flame through the King's repulse of a prayer by Apollo's Priest Chryses for the restoration of his captive daughter who has been awarded to Agamemnon as share in the booty of a stormed city. Another prisoner Briseis fell to Achilles. The God avenged his Priest by a pestilence which forced the King to compliance coupled with a seizure of Briseis. Achilles yields but resigns all share in the war with Troy.

An attempt was made to end the war by a duel between Paris and Menelaus in the sight of Priam and Troy's Councillors. Helen previously points out to Priam the Achaean Captains. Menelaus is victor but Troy will not yield. Andromache and Hector foresee Troy's capture and bid farewell. The war proceeds with varying fortunes especially against Greece. Zeus mainly favours Troy even permitting a barrier erected by the Greeks between Troy and the Fleet to be victoriously assaulted. Hector threatens the Fleet with flames notwithstanding the defence by Ajax with his twenty two cubits pike.

Agamemnon soon saw the blunder he had made. He armed himself magnificently, goes into battle and achieves valiant successes but is wounded and has to retire. An assemblage of the Chief decides upon an expression of a desire for friendship with Achilles. The mission meets with a complete negation. It finds Achilles plying to Patroclus on the lyre.

PROLOGUE—WRATH

AGAMEMNON—ACHILLES

For nine long years had Greece besieged Troy Town
 And still it seemed to keep its old renown
 Why should it populous and walled have cause for fear
 Of a host armed but with bow sword and spear
 Against walls Gods had built to mock the might
 Of such force to Time's end by sheer breadth and height ?
 Only on the front could a siege be pressed
 Egress ingress were free throughout the rest
 Troy yet could draw from Asian States behind
 Food and wares and war furniture in kind—
 Yes even men at arms with whom it would
 Sulk forth and shed Greek and foreign blood
 But a change there was Troy that once had been
 Lycia's Phrygia's suzerain Queen
 Had to buy help more dearly than before,
 For those had the same foes at their own door
 Agamemnon was as Mycenæ's King
 More than choice of forces that Greece could bring
 Many Captains feudatories of lands
 Held of him were subject to his commands
 Some had been Helen's suitors—But One came
 Constrained by no bond but pure thirst for fame
 Son of old Pelus King in Thessaly,

And of Thetis, great Goddess of the Sea.
 To the Atreida he had sworn no oath :
 He partook no quarrels of one or both.
 Two forces had ruled him since he drew breath,
 Care for war more than life, honour than death.
 Soon he tired of spying from day to day
 For some postern by which to pierce his way ;
 Of beating Ida's slopes, forest glades, and rocks,
 To snare some Royal shepherd with his flocks ;
 Of repulsing chance raids, disgust, or pride,
 When townsmen were ripe for a dash outside.
 His choice was, to vary a dull blockade.
 Storm of wealthy forts by escalade.
 Whatever the project, if doubt who led
 No Princee but he was chosen for the head.
 Atreides was " the King " ; he stamped the whole ;
 But Achilles Pelcides was the Soul.
 Little wonder if the Senior tired
 Of the renown for deeds that youth " inspired."
 Suspected designs oft in the Goddess-born
 To treat even a Pelopid with scorn.
 Pelcides on his own part chafed to yield
 Deference to one seldom in the Field.
 And tanted with vice, the young think none worse.
 Fondness to clutch and hoard pelf in a purse.

Now, Though deemed " impregnable," the Hero won
 The holy City of Eëtion.

Large spoil—the town was richest in the land—
 Many captives ; not men—they died, sword in hand—
 But women, from far and near ; for the tale
 Of strength brought high, and fair, within the pale.
 Achilles let others divide and share.
 Chryseis and Briscis, each of rare

Charm were assigned by lot—to the King One
 One His by whom the feat of arms was done
 Chryseis daughter of Apollo's Priest
 At Chrysa had been Eteion's guest
 The Old Man, as to save his Child from death,
 Hurried—with his Shrine's treasure the God's Wrath
 On the gold Sceptre—to redeem the Maid
 Both Atreide, the whole Greek host he prayed
 To think of their far homes of his forlorn
 The rest pitied Agamemnon in scorn
 Threatened 'Beware Greybeard, of coming here!
 If again I find thee loitering near
 With thy peevish complaints the present grief
 May breed fresh thy own needing more relief
 Sceptre and wreaths will then avail thee not!
 The girl in my Greek home shall share my lot
 Wounded in pride and heart angry and sore
 The Old Man knelt on the billowy shore
 Offering to his God one only vow
 'Repay my tears Apollo with thy bow!
 Phœbus heard As he hastened down the path
 From the peaks of Olympus in a storm of wrath
 The shafts in his quiver clashed—for the God
 Like Night rushed—it every step he trod,
 Nearing the flock, sitting arrow he shot
 Straight mules and swift dogs sickened on the spot,
 A second, man The air smoked flamed with fires
 Rising sinking—innumerable pairs
 Kalchas at a Council on the tenth day
 Called by Achilles to seek how to stay
 The plague and pledged help should he dispense
 'Great Ones' traced back the source of the disease
 To Apollo's wrath for his Priest A gust

Of envy, jealousy, pride, greed, and lust
 Swept the "King" away: "Kalchas! scheming foe,
 Prophet never of good to me, but woe!
 And whence, tell me, if I shall now resign
 A prize to cure the plague, is to come mine?"
 "From Troy," Achilles answered: "meantime wait."
 "Nay: but now? So, as stirred somehow, debate
 Throws the task on me as 'King' to allay
 The God's anger, roused in whatever way,
 I restore the Maid: and thou may'st surmise
 At leisure, how I shall replace my Prize!"

"Menaces!" cried Achilles: "I no more
 Fight for you, Atreide—wage your own war!"
 "Stay, or Go!" the answer: "for thee to choost.
 If away, not I will it be who lose.

Of all our Princes here, thou with thy curst
 Temper art the one that I like the worst.
 But a last visit I shall pay to show.
 Which, Thou or I, is stronger of the two."

Achilles was in two moods: to snatch out
 His sword, the Prince's gone; or—this his doubt—
 Let time avenge him. His heart ached between:
 When down came Athena, sent by the Queen,
 Standing behind him, seen by none else there,
 She caught hold of him by the golden hair:
 Promised amends: but, "let him rage in word
 To its utmost fury; he speech his sword"
 Obeying, he thrust back the blade; then flung
 All epithets left in him, with free tongue:
 "Wine-bibber, money-grubber, with one eye
 On look-out for offal, stag's heart to flee,
 Spoil-sneaker, when more valiant men have bled,
 Master who grinds his People's bones for bread!

Thou canst seize my Prize What an Army gave
Its Chief my resume But pray me to save
When Hector drives and slays ? Thus rood I swear
Shall sooner again rind and green leaves bear
Than in thy distress will I bring relief
To thy Achæans in their day of grief !

Chryseis was restored and her old sire
Prevailed on Phœbus to forgo his ire
But to knowledge of the Greek camp repent
Threats ! 'twould shame its General so he sent
For Briseis !—an outrage working worse
Ill to all than the plague from the Priest's curse
' Unwilling she ', mute her lord saw her part
Afrud a farwell would have bare a heart
Yet she had her share when ' in tears ' he sat
On the beach not alone but desolate
For his Mother Thetis hearing him weep
Had risen a mist from the hoary deep
To comfort in his wrongs and had assured
Him vengeance for all that he had endured
' Wait and Zeus would lay on the Greeks the cost
Of their choice of Captain to lead their host
That Sovereign himself should be taught to pay
Respect to the bravest in his array

He stretched night—a pall—when Death is freer to
work his will.

Even a while He doubted, as before Sarpedon died.
Of the death of Patroclus, upon which mode to decide—
Whether slay him now by Hector's hand, or should he
remain

For a period carcering in triumph through the Plain?
And this was the course He chose; frightened Hector
from the Field,

By his example making Trojans and Lycians yield
Patroclus the joy of stripping Sarpedon's armour off.
Provision for the Body was His own charge: that enough.
Apollo bore It, bare, dabbled with gore and dust,
away:

Bathed, anointed, in garb inviolable by decay;
Then saw it was wafted home from slough of slain friends
and foes;

Lapped, with his race, in a soft eternity of repose.

The body and armour remained the spoil of Patroclus;
who pursues a triumphant course.

A fatal boon.

He might have overlived life's noon, even its afternoon!
Obeying Friend and Patron he would have been praised
and blest!

Yet how for Youth to halt when Zeus fans the fire in
its breast!

For life emerged from Shadow to turn when it has begun.
To feel that it is driving the Chariot of the Sun!
Shouting "Onward!" to the horses and the Charioteer.
He had passed the Rampart, leaped over the Trench;
and drawn near

To the God built Wall Now he forgot all Achilles told
Spying a jutting angle that might, as he thought, give
hold

For hands and knees he clambered—as if by himself
he could

Storm him! On a tower angry Apollo stood
Thrice the God mu'te hustled him off but when for
the fourth time

In intoxication of success he essayed to climb,
The God spoke out 'Begone' thinkest 'tis for thee
to destroy

What Destiny has denied to thy Better—this great
Troy?

Patroclus drew in awe far back but failed to comprehend
The spirit of the God's warning It could have but
one end

Hector lost heart, overwhelmed by the fury of the
attack

He was minded to order his broken battalions back
Within the Wall Apollo dissuaded him Now dis
guised

As Asius brother to Queen Hecuba he advised
To quit the Skyan Gates, and meet Patroclus on the
Plain

Apollo advanced in front invisible in the train of
rank and file Zeus determines that doomed Hector
shall repeat his triumphs

Among Achæans he spread a sense
As of coming disaster while for Troy the influence
Was an inspiration of victory Hector did not stay

To run a tilt against other chariots on his way,
 But drove at Patroclus ; and he, in his left hand, a spear
 With his right, jumping down hurled at Hector's
 Charioteer

Kebriones, a craggy lump he had snatched up ; the stone
 Struck the forehead between the eyes, and crushed the
 entire bone.

With fearless courage Patroclus seized a foot of the Dead
 To drag, and Hector, quitting his Car, caught hold by
 the head—

Lions for a stag—east, south, winds to wrench an oak—
 abreast

They strove : but the Greeks won as the Sun passed
 towards the West.

And still raged Patroclus ; drunk with blood thrice he
 broke the rank.

Returning by a lane lined each side by a gory bank.
 Twenty-seven deaths were the sum—but now Apollo made
 Himself a mantle of darkness, and followed the fourth
 raid ;

Smote Patroclus, dizzy-blind, sent the helmet from his
 head

Rolling in the dust, snapped the spear as if it were a reed.
 Loosed the breastplate star-studded, and tumbled the
 belt, and shield

That had sheltered him from head to foot, down upon
 the Field.

Goddess Até had him, clutched, froze the brain power ;
 he stood

Dazed and paralyzed.

Then, young Euphorbus, a Trojan, good
 Beyond his years on horseback, speed of foot, and with
 the spear,

Noted in war, gave Patroclus the first wound coming
near—

A stroke between the shoulders—then having plucked
from the skin

His spear, ran to his company back for refuge therein —
No match for a Patroclus he a mere boy even then
However as—instinct more than consciously—to his
Men

The Hero dragged backwards Hector pushed through
to the front rank

And unresisted drove his spear—a death wound—
through the flank

‘ So but thus he gloried ‘ has come Patroclus of
thy tale

Of sacking Troy and bearing off our women when ye sul
Of orders by Achilles to bring him the tunic torn
From my breast red with my heart’s blood that this
day I had worn

No account took ye of me in war or foreboding feel
That my spear would give thee to vultures for a dainty
meal ‘

Faint the accents in reply Hector tis thy time to
boast

But Zeus and Phoebus have given thee victory at my cost
They took my armour off Had it been twenty such
as thou

My spear would have laid the whole throng of my
assailants low

Of Immortals I charge my death on Phœbus and to Fate
For Men Euphorbus wounded first Hector thou
camest late

Strip the armour But remember, thou mayst not wear
it long

Lo! thy hands. Achilles! theirs the force. Death's,
and Fate's the Strong!"

With last words mourning a lost manhood's prime, the
spirit fled.

Wheresoever to sojourn, beside not within the Dead.

Vainly Hector called after it: "Who knows it may
not be

Myself that am bid to work on Achilles Fate's decree?"

Then, leaving the armour to chance, and plucking out
the spear,

He chased in vain the fugitive steeds, and Charioteer.

ZEUS PITIES MAN

ZEUS might have been content to leave passions of
mortal men
To seethe in their earthly cauldron as wild beasts in
their den
But sight of the steeds of Achilles feeling for Man's
woes
Forced the Sir of Gods and Lord of Heaven to interpose
The pur with ease had outrun Hector, but when he
ceased to pursue
Returned until the Body of Patroclus was in view
There standing aloof from the turmoil the two Immortal
Steeds recked nought except
That the man they loved was dead and sorrowfully
they wept
For him who now lay trodden beneath soldier Trojans'
feet
With many a sharp flick of the whip with many a
threat
With blandishments full many and with speech both
rough and kind
Antomedon prived ordered them to leave the Field
behind
Every stable device he tried, it was all in vain,
Their obstinate resolve was where the corpse was to
remain

Immovable they halted, as some column stiff and stark
 Raised the sepulchre of lord or lady within to mark.
 Hoofs planted on the ground. they held the lone chariot
 there

In pining and regret for their loved, dead Charioteer.
 As they stooped, their manes in an ambrosial cascade
 broke.

Besmear'd with mire and warm tears. on either side of
 the yoke.

Zeus, seeing them weep. was moved ; the thunder
 began to roll.

As in pity for their grief. He held converse with His soul :
 " Poor wretches. what possessed Olympus to give you
 away,

Immortals like to ourselves, exempt from earthly decay.
 To share in service of Peleus. his son here, and his clan.
 The woes that are the lot of ever unfortunate Man :
 For nowhere exists a Thing so distressful from its birth
 To its death of creatures that breathe and creep upon
 the earth.

But no mortal worm. ev'n Hector at this height of his
 pride.

Shall drive Immortals—if a Goddess's child may—or ride
 In the chariot they draw :—

Enough for him that he strips
 The Dead. and pursues the Greeks to their tents and to
 their Slups.

Master you ? not he ! I, Zeus, forbid it ! See ! I
 inspire

Spring in ev'ry limb and set your passionate hearts on
 fire.

Be guided by Automedon ; bear him in safety out
 To the Myrmidon lines, forth from the *mélée* and the rout ! "

So Balus and Xanthus at the voice they knew of voice
Treasuring still inside their breasts their anguish but
before

Trojan hand could clutch the reins had whirled the
chariot far

Outside the volcano into the deep fringe of the war

Upon all sides the bitter raged red hot the passion
burned,

And the fortunes of Greece and Troy continually turned
Zeus purposed the fight to be close accordingly He gave
Licence to Pallas—right glad she—to fire her Greeks
to save

The Deid from outrage, so from Heaven swooping
down she came,

And stirred Menelaus and each Ajax to avert the shame
Yet again inclined the balance in Troy's favour, Hector
proud

Of the armour he had stripped off Patroclus fiercely
mowed

His way through the adverse ranks each spear of his
reached its mark

To spread the terror also Zeus shook His Ægis and
dark

Grew Ida, lightnings flashed a long echoing burst
of loud

Thunder shook the mountain to its very base, and a
cloud

Descended and enveloped the Greek chieftains while
clear air

Breathed elsewhere about till in indignant wrath and
despair

For right bare justice Ajax pleaded Right Zeus
grant us light!

Then death, if it please Thee : but oh ! not to die in
the night !

Zeus granted that much of the prayer : but not so but
that still—

Equal valour against valour, will equal against will—
One side's best champions, jostled, battered, hammered,
bruised and crushed.

Inch by inch, foot by foot, and yard by yard, were
backward pushed.

Vainly Menelaus and Meriones from the fray
Raised the corpse shoulder-high, out of the blood-pool
where it lay ;

Down at Hector's rush it rolled, to the Town now, now
the Fleet,

Quivering, slipping, soughing, in red mire, under mailed
feet,

Foes, or friends',—

while, like to a bird wing-broken, fluttered-by.

Despairing of its release, a pale Ghost in agony !
And Ajax's still, haughty soul itself confessed to fear,
Not for himself, but the dead, for the Friend he held
most dear.

Hard to stoop, and beg for help—from Peleides most
of all—

But, with Gods and Fortune adverse, loftiest spirits fall.
To the ships Antilochus came, bearing his cry of woe.
Weeping :

" Achilles, in the dust lies our Patroclus, low,
Slain by Hector, who utters, in thy armour clad, a
boast

To give the Body to Troy's dogs in spite of all our host ! "

He found Achilles who counting long on his Friend's
return
Had caught no sound but might mean either that men
joy, or mourn
It must be, he mused the Trojans were difficult to
beat
That when compelled at last to yield they made a slow
retreat
Patroclus even might have had to drive them to their
Wall
But the Plain was wide he must wait for news till
eventfall
If long the delay the more eventful would be the tale
Attempt more than he was bid he so rash as try to
scale
The Wall? Incredible! Besides had not Achilles
heard
In confidence through Thetis, but from Zeus on His
own word
That not for himself let alone his Friend was left the
renown
Of being the Chosen of Fate to storm and sack Troy
Town?

Was for the Friend! for the easy faith with which
he sent
Youth and valour to a battlefield pledged to be content
To repulse not pursue!
For Achilles' unending thirst
Of revenge upon Troy! And first, on Hector the
accurst!

But vengeance without arms?

Nothing for me except to weep!"

Thetis heard the tears drop:

and at once rose up from the Deep;

"Yes; arms; and vengeance also on the Slayer, in the
strife.

At a price—a Mother to pay!—just a life for a life!"

"Blood I must have, whatever to Me, to You, be the
cost;

My life? How bear to live-on when my Patroclus is
lost?"

Enough—his Mother was gone.—

Meanwhile his dearest one lay.

Doomed so it seemed, to 'Troy's scavenger dogs for play,
and prey

But far from Hera Pallas, to let unburied remain

The body of the Champion who had in their cause been
slain!

Down from Olympus floated rainbow-winged Iris to
bring

Word thence—though the Queen's will was to thwart
the will of the King—

"Be Achilles, although without armour, up and about;
Bid him, heeding nought but his dead, stand by the
Trench and Shout!"

Up sprang Achilles; and Pallas round his great
shoulders flung

Her Ægis serpent-fringed; and Divine that She is—
then hung

About his head a golden cloud-coronet from which
came,

Of her contrivance, leaping jets of endless angry flame.
As when a gang of corsairs a sudden descent have made.

Upon an isle, and its men sally forth against the raid
Trying ugly battles' fortune while from far off they call
On Allies to man ship and help by beacons on the
Wall

So backing the rampart Achilles visible alone
Roared flashed through the dusk death to the foes
side life to his own

His shout doubled by Pallas—an Achaian—froze the
air

'Twas like the chill of horror unspeakable and despair
At the heart of some beleaguered town when the trumpets
blare

Heralds the beginning of the storming by a wild rout
So ring a clear message of doom in that strange brazen
shout'

It appalled all living things—every long maned Trojan
hors

For its foreboding rebelling it curbs to its headlong
course

Rushed its chariot backwards each charioteer at the
sight

Of Athena's fire shooting its inexhaustible light
From the head of Peleides partook of his horses fright
Thrice from above the Greek trench boomed those
tempestuous cries,

And thrice city walls recoiled Troy's warriors and
Allies

There then from their chariots fallen, in their bright
armour clad

Lay twelve Trojan chiefs the best and noblest gory and
dead

Neath slain and their arms his comrades sated with
carnage found

And laid on his bier, their loved One ; then, standing
all around

Brought to the Trench.

The Swift-foot following, with slow, sad tread,
Wept o'er the wounds that had robbed him of the fond,
faithful Dead—

Of the Friend he sent forth at morning glorious—and
now.

At evening, received from the hard-fought Field returned
—but how !

So, a sudden hush ; for, by Hera Queen of Heaven's
will.

The tireless Sun, reluctant, had sunk in Ocean ; and—
still

Twilight stealing softly on—both Armies paused from the
jar

And fury of battle in the evenly balanced war.

The peril is so near, even to the Phthian squadron, that Achilles yields to Patroclus and sends him to the field. He begins a victorious career by the death of Sarpedon. Continuing until rebuked by Apollo on Troy's walls, he has the insolence to hope to storm them. Fighting in the *mêlée* he, in the confusion of brain and warfare, is wounded successively by young Euphorbus, Apollo, Hector. Hector puts on the dead man's armour, would have, but for their flight, caught and driven the chariot horses. Zeus looks on, and pities both their master for the day and them. As for the combat, he intervenes mainly to keep it afoot. He has arranged for the worthy obsequies of His son, Sarpedon. For Patroclus, whatever the agonizing of the Spirit, let them struggle over the dead. At length Greek hope and muscles failed. Swift Antilochus ran and told Achilles that Patroclus was slain and his body in peril. Hera and Athena played a desperate stroke for its deliverance. Trojans were awed and pause in the struggle. Achilles, without further opposition, conducts it within the Greek lines.

THE HEAVENLY ARMS

THETIS as she had pledged a mother's word was come
 To beg Arms of Hephestus at his Olympian home
 Where on Earth a Palace fair is that on the Holy Hill?
 Could there be? Was not this the work of a surpassing
 skill?

Graceful gracious Charis ran forward to embrace the
 Guest

And she brought the news to her Spouse at his forge in
 glad haste,

For oft he had told her how his Mother Hera in shame
 At the misshapen infant she had borne—Immortal—
 lame!

Hurled him into the Deep where Thetis and Euphrosyne
 Comforted and nursed him in the Palaces of the Sea
 An odd lumpish lump he moved as lightly as his true
 heart

To offer her he revered the best homage of his Art
 "Oh!" he exclaimed "That as certainly as I shall
 create

Wonders in Arms, I could charm them against Death
 too and Fate!

In his high workshop twenty bellows blew at his
 behest

Each at heat toned by a thought, or subsided into rest

First, in the white glow he cast brass nor point, nor edge,
could pierce,

With tin, and gold, and silver, stirring all to boil in
fierce

Convulsions. Then, his strong arms set the anvil on
its block ;

And as tongs gripped, and, with roar like Etna's, the
hammer struck.

Images rose in dazzling fire, like pageants in a dream :
Phantasms of his quick brain ; figures dancing on a
sun's beam.

Lo ! a five-fold shield, fitted with a silver belt for him
Who should bear it in battle, hung from the bright,
triple rim.

And ah ! the infinitude of designs he chased thereon,
Earth and Heaven, the Seas, the full Moon, and the
gracious Sun,

Pleiades, and Hyades. Giant Orion, and there.

Too busy watching Orion to dip in Ocean, the Bear.

A miracle of Art : and instinct, as all such, with soul
That brought it into existence, and waits to stir the
whole.

As the Heavenly Artificer thought out a design,
And fused it on the anvil, 'twas stamped on the Shield
Divine.

Whenever the Master gazed, from the surface life arose ;
Then a shadow issued, and back it sank into repose.

Still, as at Art's birth, a Master's eye has but to behold,
A miracle will be renewed, as with the Shield five-fold.

Nor only Stars and Seas, but two cities Hephæstus
wrought.

Marriages there were ; and brides being from their
chambers brought ;

Young men and maidens formed the dance, circling
in mazy rounds

Pipes were tuned lyres were strung there was a rapture
of sweet sounds

Surely a gay festival! May it last! But look again!
The feast is become a brawl a wedding guest has been
slain!

Has blood money not been paid? Nay! Yea!
Let the Court decide

Elders sit, Pleaders plead Heralds hush Thus clear,
a man died

Shame on Civil feuds! But see here is given open war
Two Armies in array are allied they are come from
far

One would storm the City, and share the spoil with its
Ally

The Other would crush the scorpion nest out of memory
Meanwhile, the warrior townsmen gathered outside the
Gate

Had arranged an ambuscade and he stealthily in wait
With both sides Discord and Tumult mixed while
murderous Fate

Her mantle blood red cares but for the quarrel to close
late

Joyous victory wavers here there again again
Piling up higher, and yet higher, mountains of the
slain

While to eyes with insight the graven figures seem to
move,

As if live men on a battlefield round their Dead they
strove!

Fancy turned the kind peace-loving soul in the
lanc God woke

It might have been in Phthia : on Troy's Plain ere the
storm broke.

As graver skimmed. the surface ever widened of the
Shield ;

It hovered, and there grew rich glebe, thrice ploughed.
a fallow field.

To and fro the labourers drove the beasts. their special
care,

And as each came to the end of a furrow with his pair,
Ready stood the farmer with. in his hand. a cup of
wine.

Ah ! effort of a ploughman to be first to touch the line !
The wonder that to the eye following the clusel's track.
Its fine indent had turned the gleam of the gold a mould-
black !

A harvest next. As the reapers cut. sickles in their
hands.

Three binders. behind. tied sheaves. tall blades. full
cars. with bands.

Boys gathered in bundles strays fallen by the way,
to tie

With the sheaves. A King. with sceptre, joyful but
mute, stood by.

Heralds meanwhile, awaiting the reapers. work done.
prepare

For supper 'neath yon oak an ox. sacrifice. hearty fare.
In due order a vineyard, the grapes black, shot
through with gold,

The clusters mid green leaves tasking the silver poles
to hold.

An azure trench and hedge about : one path to enter in
When the hour should have arrived for the vintage to
begin.

Already it is time! See! the young girls and boys
are come
To gather and bear the ripe fruit in woven baskets
home
Listen! somewhere in gladness of the vintage sounds
a note
On a harp and somewhere song a scrap from a tuneful
throat
And straightway a concourse with spontaneous accord
beat
Time, and a rapid river rolls of skipping dancing feet
Yet again the impulse shifts Lowing rush the cattle
all
Kine calves and bull—gold and tin—at dawn from many
a stall
Four herdsmen—golden—attend them, and nine hounds,
brave and fleet—
What the danger that these would not amply suffice to
meet?
They are bound for their accustomed meadows and with
one will
Make for the rushy bed where trickles the murmuring
rill
But as the bull gallop onwards heading the foremost
rank
Two dread lions burst from the reeds upon the stream
let's bank
They have dragged him bellowing off The herdsmen
urge in vain
Their dogs at safe distance these bark but will not seize
the twain
Earth is sport for Force and Wrath even when
Peace seems to bloom,

Fate may have been commissioning her ministers of doom :

Heaven's self is not free from them, as its Immortals know :

Witness the lame God, who had felt how roughly its storms blow.

In his work he had pictured evil ; but he could not part
From it without attesting that joy is the aim of Art.
He was glad as the grave tracing his brain's vision
drew

Long woodland glades of emulous enchantment into
view,

Flocks of white sheep and folds, with, nowhere, dream
of savage beast,

And shepherds living lives, each an innocent, endless
feast.

In a garden-hall like that planned for Ariadne, bands
Danced, youths and fair virgins, clasping fast one
another's hands.

The maidens wore fine linen robes, and wreaths from
sweet flow'rs strung ;

Shining tunics the youths ; gold swords from belts of
silver hung.

Now, round and round they whirled ; and now a leader
of the troop

Would thread it without break, and return, a sinuous
loop ;

Still—the artist temper—not content with his triumphs
till

He sent two tumblers singing, spinning, just to prove
his skill.

Lastly, for the uttermost rim of the Shield, he thought
good

To roll old Oceanus the World Rivers giant flood
Tideless and stormless with its irresistible embrace,
That forbids Earth, Air, Seas to press beyond it into
Space
Lighter tasks, though beyond Man's wits the corslet
that outshone
The flame of any earthly fire and beamed forth like the
Sun
Grooves of tin that swayed with every muscle as it
pressed
A strong helmet curiously dight and its golden crest
The whole creation of the smith and sculptor poet
God
That had waked out of gross metal at this time Beings
wood
He swept into his brawny arms and bore where sat
apart
Thetis, with one image—the doomed Son—in sad eyes
and heart
Thanks these silent spoke, and clutching the Arms,
as hawk its prey
With self-massacring haste she swooped to the Fleet—
where dawned Day
On the Dead Achilles wept still, then over him, on all
A something of suspense of expectation seemed to
fall
Armour panoply piercing the tent canvas without rent
Dazzling from immensity on the flooring of the tent
None braver are than Myrmidons, but in their sheer
surprise,
As at a planet blazing on them from the morning skies,
The rest in wild panic fled forth not so was made their
Chief

And, higher still, while proud of Arms beyond belief,
Though his first thought was of the means he now
 possessed to meet
His Trojan foe abhorred, and grind to dust beneath his
 feet.

Thetis by the desire of Achilles visits the Palace of Hephaestus on Olympus to beg armour. Willingly he complies. We are told of the wondrous art. The forge is described and the metals. Rich and of the best quality they would pass the most delicate tests by human armourers. The supreme merit is in the Divine artificer. He thinks into His furnace and the forms forthwith breathe themselves into the metals. By the end of the visit a complete equipment is in the grasp of Thetis, and she conveys it to the quarters of Her Son. Of its fitting there is no question. Her Son's first procedure is to call an Assembly and confess his personal guilt in confounding a personal with a national grievance.

For the sake of a girl of Lyrnessus

As soon as the national forces were ready he was prepared with all his own followers to join its ranks. In effect he commands in-chief the Greek Army, and as such sails forthwith the Trojan forces already on foot beside the invaders in accordance with Hector's rash belief that they were masters of the field. He splits them into two blocks, trampling down the half with which he begins. The whole is a cruel massacre leaving Achilles at the walls.

Till within the Skæan Gates had passed all—but I name a Son.

On the Dead Achilles wept still ; so. they who had
 been bred
 With him ; whom but yesterday he gloriously had
 led.

Then. a sudden hush. No form was visible : but
 word—

A Goddess's—"Behold !"—and. a crash, thunderous,
 was heard :

And Shield, Corslet, Greaves. Helm, piercing canvas
 without a rent,

Clanged, as from Immensity, on the flooring of the tent.

So, vengeance was assured ; but next how for him
 to retrace

Steps disloyal to Achæa, and re-unite his Race.

Before the assembled host he in brief speech straight
 and strong,

Confessed his guilt for visiting on it a private wrong :
 "Would Artemis." he too frankly wished. "with a
 shaft from her bow

Had sped from off our Fleet the damsel to the World
 Below.

E'er fellow Greeks had bitten in death agony the soil—
 And this for a girl of Lyrnessus. my share of the Spoil !"

Agamemnon, with one wound in limb, had ten in
 his pride.

But, shifting all blame for the strife on Atë from his
 side,

Was. as liable for her mischief, "willing to restore
 Briseis, with ten talents. wares, and seven women more."

Thus. back the fair girl moaned : "came to what. a
 home once, now was none.

For was not the Captive's friend and comforter. kind
 Patroclus. gone ? "

The duel of Achilles and Hector was unequal. The disappointment contrived against the Trojan by the trick of deluding him with an imaginary brother Deiphobus and Athena's restoration of the spear of Achilles to him affect a modern reader's sense of fairness. But it is enough that the Fates had decided. It is useless to complain of partisanship in Olympian Gods and Goddesses. We must be content with the majesty of the spectacle—the Greek host on the one side, all Troy on the walls, old King Priam, Queen and Mother and a dying Hero in their shuddering view. And yet the confronting of the complaining Ghost with his triumphant Friend who delays his bestowal of a handful of dust from a funeral Pyre is its equal.

TILL WITHIN THE SKÆAN GATES HAD
PASSED ALL—BUT PRIAM'S SON !

Lo ! Achilles rushing nigher and nigher to the Wall !
Like that star of Autumn, Dog of Orion, Chief of all
In splendour, and as baleful. Priam gazed on him as
Fate ;

And pray'd Hector while time was, to enter the Skæan
Gate.

He besought for the City's sake that he alone could save ;
For Himself, his hard ills, his sole hope of a quiet grave.
His Mother joined her entreaties in as piteous strain.
To as little effect—how could they have not been in
vain ?

He heard ; he answered not ; his soul was seething hot
with care.

For things he might have done, had not ; have dared,
and might not dare :

Enter the Gate ? and to meet Polydamas face to face !
Save himself ? and live in Troy ? Witness to his
own disgrace !

Then, from Possibles that to him Impossibles would
seem,

To schemes fantastic, easier for One like Him to
dream ;—

Lay all arms aside breastplate crested helmet sword
and spear
And waiting defenceless until Achilles should draw
near,
Pledge Troy if Achilles and Hector made peace to
restore
Helen, and treasures of her home that Paris with her
bore,
Besides—and in addition—half the wealth Ilium's
own
A fine for the guilt and the warfare's bloodshed to
atone —
As if he knew not the Swift foot would have no jot more
care
For his helplessness than hound for helplessness of a
hare
More wear of thought his tired brain refused but as
soldiers would
Called, and impatiently for the arbitrament of blood
Armed he decided to wait there and see which of the
two
Jove meant to favour with victory himself, or his foe
Alas ! and alas ! for all the bravest of the brave !
A blaze of armour as flame, or sun at dawn and a
wave,
Wild pain swept from where he had stood, Hector at
the sight
Of his foe approaching ! His limbs hurried him into
flight !
He fled under the City Wall along the wide high way
Achilles recognized and followed as a hawk his prey
Past the Citadel the wind tossed wild fig trees to the
spot

"High talk," cried he, "designed to unnerve a foe.
If I die,

It will not be of wounds from a javelin as I fly.

At worst I fear a spear thrust in my breast; though
may Divine

Grace to Troy grant that thou her haue die first from one
of mine!

His spear aimed at Achilles struck the centre of the
Shield;

But, unable to pierce, recoiled, and fell far on the Field.
With a loud shout he called on Deiphobus for a spear:
And understood at once how Deiphobus could not hear,
For that Pallas had deceived him, taking his Brother's
shape.

Yes; Death stared at him; and he knew that there
was no escape:

"Forsaken by Zeus long since; by Phœbus himself of
late;

With none even of his House to retard the feet of Fate;
Be it so. I, Hector, cannot accept a coward's end;
I will do a deed to which future Ages must attend."

His sword, hung by his side, he drew, weighty and sharp,
that none

Throughout Troy City could wield and wave, but his
arm alone.

His being, a passion—a despair—just one stroke—the
whole—

He whirled on Achilles, whose more furious fire of soul
Troubled not the earnest calm in which he strode to engage
His foe, savagely, coldly sure of means to wreak his
rage.

In his right hand he poised his spear, with brass head
shining bright

As Hesperus fairest star in the waning hour of night
Ah duel too ill matched ! How could sword ever hope
to near

Keen though it were, the range of the eight foot Pelian
Spear !

Achilles at once with fenceer's absolute skill would ward
Every desperate attempt to break within his guard
And search, as was likely a past lord of the arms should
know

Where it was most effectual to land a mortal blow
Yes it was where the collar bone links neck and
shoulders here

The brass wa thinner

And the hullo as burst in the Spear !

" Fool ! when thou spoiledst Patroclus not to have borne
in mind

That thou wert leaving still an Avenger for him behind
Who would see that dogs and unclean birds rend thee
to thy shame

But triumphantly entomb thy prey glorify his name ! "

Hector feeling death upon him in accents low but
clear,

For the organ of speech had been spared by the heavy
spear

Asked At thy knees if I could by thy Parents by
thy Soul

I conjure thee suffer not the dogs of the Fleet to foul
My body as if carrion but of thy grace, permit
My Parents—fix the price in brass and gold—to ransom
it

I Hector to sue to thee ! Yet here in the dust I pray
Send me back to Ilum that my people there may lay
My body on a funeral pyre, and my tattered Ghost

Descend, although humbled now, from when once I
led Troy's host ! "

"Hound," was the answer, "waste breath praying
me to mitigate

Chastisement I joy to inflict as minister of Fate.

I would that my own fire and hatred worked in me to
tear

And eat thy flesh in return for the havoc of thy spear.
At no price whatever shall leave to scare the dogs be
bought.

Were offers by endless relays of envoys to be brought.
Nor should I, for thy Mother to weep over thee, and
fold

In her arms, let Priam rescue thee for thy weight in
gold ! "

Once more Hector. "I hoped not for the grant of
my appeal ;

To wake compassion for my lot, soften a heart of steel.
But death unlocks for me the Future : I foresee an hour
When thy ruthlessness to me in this high tide of thy
pow'r

May infuse into Heaven's cup of wrath an element
Wanting, hadst thou inclined, though late, to pity and
relent

No ? Recollect hereafter, when Paris has bent his bow
From these Gates, and Apollo guides the shaft, what
I ask now ! "

Death's shadow fell ; the Soul, with a sigh after Youth's
joy, fled ;

And Achilles, plucking forth his Spear, spoke to the
deaf Dead :

"Enough for thee that thou hast died ; when Zeus shall
draw my lot

Is His concern—but to day's deed Mine will not be
forgot!

Achilles stripped Dead Hector of armour left body
bare

A sight at which Greek rank and file a multitude might
stare

They wondered at the Hero's stature as they stood
around

And none could bear to quit without endeavouring to
wound

' Surely they mocked this Hector is milder than
when he came

Torch in hand driving us sea ward to set the Fleet
afloat

As for Achilles his first thought had been to try the
Wall

On the chance the Trojans losing heart might surrender
all

' But Patroclus lies at the Ships unmourned tombless
as yet

Others dead may be forgotten never will I forget
Form Achaean Youths for your march to the Ships
and chant their

Your triumphant Prans for Him there in your midst to
hear

Trojans we march beside your towers dare to bar
our road

As Hector is dragged whom ye citizens revered as God!
Meanwhile he bore both feet binding each by a leathern
thong

To his Chariot leaving the head to tumble along
Then he mounted with the Arms, and the steeds as if
they knew

70 GREEK AND LATIN ANTHOLOGY

They outraged the Slayer of their beloved Patroclus,
flew.

Pitiful spectacle ! the Body jolted up and down,
Besmudging the blue-black locks, its whole self from foot
to crown !

For Zeus, though with grave searchings of heart had
agreed, nay, planned,

That Hector's foes might have their will of him in his
own land ;

Even in his Mother's sight, who with hair plucked out,
veil torn,

Groaned to behold her Boast in the dust, and their
Troy forlorn --

In his Father's, the old, old King's, who angrily
complained

Of remaining within the Gates, of having been restrained
From rushing out to beg the Body, though with a last
breath,

And if death instead, by the Spear that pierced him,
"Welcome, Death !"

Alas for Hector's Wife ! She heard not how the battle
went.

In a room of her house withdrawn she sat apart, intent
Upon a web she wrought, splendid with vari-coloured
dyes,

Worthy to adorn a Palace with rich embroideries.

She had bid her attendants to prepare, as oft before,
A bath for the Hero to rid him of the mire of war.

But a sound of screaming and wailing echoed from the
Wall

In a sudden fit of trembling she let the loom-rod fall :
"Come," she sobbed : "Follow me ; the heart quivers
within my breast ;

My limbs feel me as if benumbed and yet they cannot
rest

Hark ! is not that the voice in anguish of our Queen
I hear ?

What ! if Hector, who deigns not to keep the ranks
as I fear,

Should have met Achilles alone ?

Now she was on the Wall —
And lo ! her Hector dead ! tied to the Victor's Car ! his
thrill !

Night closed her eyes she fell backwards in a swoon
from her head

Fluttered not and veil, Aphrodite's gift when she was
led

A Bride from Lætion's Palace

She awoke to know
Her world had crumbled into ruins leaving nought
but we

All was over other Greeks supped then slept
Achilles brooding on Patroclus wept
He longed for him his manliness and force
In action, counsel his fire, and resource
Lights voyages joys pains together borne
One Being theirs and now *he* forlorn !
Vain to toss, from side to side prone supine
Useless circling to and fro the brain
Down at last ! and to *die* in Car around
The tomb of his Patroclus *awakened* Wound—
A track not through *of* his undud
With skin and *tr* *a* careless flayed
He returned *in* *'That'* in the sun
To take what *at* his duty done
He *suffered* near

No foul insect, would let no pebble fear,
But the twelfth morn : and the mad fit raged yet.
So some Gods scolded the rest when they met ·
“Thankless to grant Achilles still his way
In maltreating Hector, who in his day
Served you : allow the author of his doom
To deny him all dead men's right, a tomb.”

ACHILLES AND HIS DEAD

THENCE the Mymidons drove their steeds round where
in his white shroud
Lay their dear dead Patroclus with lamenting deep and
loud
For Thetis inspired a thirst for weeping and weep they
must
So that the tears of rough soldiers moistened the very
dust
Then Achilles having unbound Hector's Body and
thrown
Before his Friend's bier where it fell ingrained with dust
and prone
Vowed the camp dogs should have it and leave so
mangled and torn
That his Mother would not know the Darling, whom she
had borne
His men supped Atreides had prepared for the Chiefs
a feast
And earnestly desired to have Achilles for a guest
He would neither bathe nor eat nor drink until he had
laid
Patroclus on his pyre but for the morrow morn he
prayed
Atreides to send woodmen to the forest Ida's crown

He quitted the Princes for the shore,
Where, in a quiet spot, he lay by the waves, grieving
sore ;

Yet, for he was very weary, slept.

Then, Patroclus came ;
Spirit—but as in life—garb, size, voice, lovely eyes the
same :

“ Asleep, Achilles ? I forgotten ? Never did I find
Myself forgotten in life : I was ever in thy mind.
Give me my tomb at once, that I may pass to my own
place.

Now, flesh holds me back, though Spirit, of toiling human
race.

Refused me companionship across the River : I roam
Exiled on Earth : by Hades disowned : between them
with no home.

But clasp hands ! Thou art dearest still : and I shall
not return

After I have partaken of the flame for which I yearn.
Never again shall we sit—we two—communing apart
From comrades—though dear also—for we twain were
one in heart.

Ah the bliss of our friendship ! Thou knowest, a boy
and I

Quarrelled at dice : and of a blow by me he chanced
to die.

Therefore, by my Father, fearing a blood-feud, I was
brought

To Phthia ; and Peleus willed I should learn what thou
wert taught.

So, as now in the flower of my age I have been torn
From thee by a cruel lot cast for me when I was born,
And for thee, my Friend, also it has been decreed to fall.

Cut off as myself in thy prime under Ilium's Wall
I pray, command thee—for our love's sake do not
disobey—

Let my ashes rest by thine though I shall be far away
Achilles agreed for it was his own intent and strove
To clasp hands

Grasp the night winds that round a
house screaming rove¹

Gone the Ghost—with a surprise note as of bird waked
by dawn

Cone as smoke dispersing or tracings a night frost has
drawn

THE FUNERAL OF PATROCLUS

THE Myrmidons dressed their lines in all the full pomp
 of war.
 The drivers had yoked their horses, each Chief stood
 in his Car.
 Rank and file next, a storm-cloud, thousands, good at
 sword and spear.
 With, in their midst close friends of the Dead, carrying
 the Bier.
 They had cut their flowing locks, which as flowers now
 they shed.
 Strewing the whole Body of their Comrade, except the
 head.
 It Achilles held, and kissed, conscious with increasing
 pain
 That this was Farewell to one he should never see again !
 But at a certain spot upon the Trojan Plain he stayed.
 Of purpose then, as of old, the march of the cavalcade.
 The Bier was set down, and the site traced for a mighty
 tomb
 To hold Patroclus, and One more when He had reached
 his doom

FUNERAL RITES OVER PATROCLUS

So the Spirit had his release
Achilles shared the locks he had saved till the

As one by one the golden ringlets showered on the Bier !
The fountain of tears reopened and all were weeping
there

Fast was the Pyre and by love prepared for inflammation
but it sulked

Achilles adjured the winds North West
With vows and wine Iris at his behest
Hurried to Threæ the cave where cross grained Zephyrus
as host
Chanced to be feasting the breezy brotherhood at his
cost
She stopped not there being bound where the Ethiops
afford
Entertainment to the Gods at their hospitable board
But Boreas and Zephyr propelling a wall of cloud
Lashed the sea into waves that towered high, and roared
aloud

In stormy glee they swept the Plain, and plunged within
the Pyre :

And it hissed, and exploded into tempestuous fire !

All night they tossed the embers together ; and by the
Mound

Achilles from a gold cup poured libations on the ground.

As father by the pyre of his son, a young bridegroom,
groans.

So on him watching the flames devouring his Dear
One's bones.

At last shone Lucifer ; and, dancing o'er the sea,
Dawn came

In saffron robe ; and low was flickering the sighing
flame,

Patroclus in a pathetic dream had demanded of his beloved Achilles a speedy burial as he drags about him useless flesh and bones. His Friend performed the obsequies. But he returns in dishonour the corpse of Hector which however friendly Gods protect. Heavenly friends of Ilee or complain of the outrages to his body. Zeus favours them and Thetis is persuaded to recommend her Son to agree to a ransom. Iris is sent to advise Priam to undertake the mission. Priam goes willingly and most successfully. The Iliad closes here with the Burial.

BODY OF HECTOR

An assembly of the Gods decides, with the consent of Thetis' who answers for Achilles, to arrange for him to surrender, for ransom, the body of Hector. Iris, sent by Zeus, announced to King Priam that he may safely in person visit Achilles, and return with the Body for its Burial. Zeus for more security sends Hermes to accompany the old King. Priam, against Hecuba's unwillingness, and that of his surviving children, accomplishes the journey. Hermes brings him within the apartment where Achilles broods over the loss of Patroclus. Suddenly He is aware He is being addressed; besought by the desolate father of Hector; and compared with His own lonely father Peleus. The picture Priam draws is irresistible, and the ransom is accepted, the still-hated body yielded. Priam returns a Conqueror, to a City for once believing in Cassandra. Within the Palace, in intervals of the Minstrelsy, they by turns lament Hector's death, the Wife, loss of her sole bulwark against slavery for herself, disinheritance for her child, the Mother execrates a monster she would rejoice to rend in pieces and Helen regrets one who was sensible of nought in herself but the ideal of woman's charm! A student of the Iliad bids its wondrous Minstrel farewell, with regret, admiration, love.

PRIAM TO BEG HECTOR'S BODY

Iris brings a message from Olympus She found the
Palace echoing groans

The King grovelling on the Courtward stones
Head and neck crusted with road mire each Son
Blushing for living now their betters gone
And mourning less for ruin that come must
Than for the strange sight—Priam in the dust
Daughters Daughters in law swelling the flood
By fresh tears for their own sons set in blood
None but Priam saw Iris there by him
She spoke and he quaked in every limb

Courage! Zeus sends me boding thee no ill
But to assure thee pity and good will
Hector He honoured and will let no more
His body lie unburied on the shore
He choosts thee to give thy Son a grave
Among his People that he died to save
Carry with thee a Ransom of a kind
To soothe and content but above all, mind
That thou go alone except for one man
A Herald and advanced in years who can
Drive the mules and when the whole work is done
Go thou home with the Body of thy Son
Fear not Zeus sends an escort wise and sure

They quitted as a death-bed—slow to plight
Troth on Angel's visit, or Eagle's flight.

For a safeguard, summoning to His side
Hermes who loves mankind, Zeus bade him guide
The King on his perilous way. The God
Fastened his wondrous sandals, took his rod,
And, a Phthian, in graceful youth's first bloom,
Met the chariot halting by the tomb
Of Ilius.

Bound, as Priam said they were,
To his Prince, he offered to lead them there
Himself; while his Lord abjured the fight.
Had witnessed Hector's prowess with delight:
"Ev'n now, though, mangled, by the tents it lay,
Heaven had not suffered his Body to decay."

So the Youth mounted, and drove.

Night at fall
Whispered dangers; the God brushed aside all;
At the Greck fence, where feasting guards drank deep,
He shed upon their eyelids poppy sleep;
Gates opened: at the Phthian camp, without
Hindrance from the Captains who sat about,
He unbarred the Hall. Leaving Priam there,
Hermes, confessed, winged to the upper air.

In the gloom the Hero, nursing his pride
In lust for vengeance still unsatisfied;
When, lo! a form defenceless, old, and lone,
Yet ev'ry inch a King as on his Throne!
Sight sorrowful! on bent knees stiff with age,
Kissing the hands that in unappeased rage
Had crimsoned Ilium's meadows with a flood,
Drawn from the Suppliant's veins, royal blood!

It was as when upon some rustic town
 Drops, conscience struck, a hunted outlaw down
 Fleeing to be shaven from the fresh guilt
 Of a neighbour's blood in chance medley spilt
 Sudden the stillness seems to have given way
 To a gale big with ruin and dismay

Outside they wondered when the storm would break
 On the Stranger At last the old man spake

Think Achilles of thy Sire God-like King
 Old as am I seated deep pondering—
 Envy beyond his borders, inside strife—
 How, on the desolating verge of life
 Hope to guard his kingdom within and out
 Then he remembers Thee and mocks at doubt
 Dreams that each sail is bringing from the sea
 Glad tidings of his hero son—of Thee!
 Hopes day by day to hail his champion come
 From Troy a victor to his Native home
 All hapless I a father like to thine,
 No band of sons equal in Troy to mine
 Where now? Of one after another rest
 Still I had Hector best and bravest left
 While I kept him none had I lost, but Thou
 Hast taken him Priam is childless now!
 Nought of him on earth but a poor bruised heap
 Of bones!—

Oh! give that over them I may weep!
 In mercy take the Ransom that I bring!
 Mercy on the torn corpse here mouldering!
 Dread just Heaven that hates a pitiless breast
 Robbing unburied dead of rightful rest!
 And as I pray look you on my white hair
 Think 'tis your Father prays, and grant the prayer!

Remorseless still? Did ever mortal dare
 What I have dared? Ever lived one to hear
 What I bear now? I, Priam, fawn upon,
 And kiss the hand that slew my Son! my Son!"

He ceased:

Achilles saw his native land
 Rise in a vision: his Sire on the strand
 Waiting news from Troy—from his Son! Ah! No;
 Save he was slain: gone to the Shades below!
 A passion of tears seized him.

As he drew
 Gently his young hand from the old, they two
 Discoursed in strange concert griefs, diverse keys,
 Harmonious still, strophes and antistrophes.
 In the dust Priam for his Hector mourned;
 And Achilles groan for each groan returned.
 Now for friend he had let go to the grave.
 Now for the Sire he might not live to save.

But ev'n the gust of grief, which through the tent
 Had echoed, and beyond, at last was spent.

Achilles felt a wave of pity roll—

Grey head, brave heart—through his relenting soul:—

"Foes though we are, and yet must be," he cried:

"Let there be truce, and seat Thee by my side;

We will forget past sorrows if we may:

Sufficient the day's evil for the day.

Outside the Olympian Palace stand

Two casks ready to the Thunderer's hand;

Here, there, as chances, does He dip and throw

Ruin, or grandeur, happiness, or woe—

Which, need Immortals care?—sometimes a flood

Of misery, the whole, no spray of good;

Ah! for Fortune's scapegoat, branded from birth,

Helpless miscreant, wandering round earth !
 Or Zeus plays at balancing lots each hand
 Dipping, throwing from where the two casks stand
 Thus has He used thy House and name

Fame told

Of thy wealth ere we came in sons and gold
 How Lesbos to Phrygia thy domain
 But the Powers dealt Thee and Thy House a ban
 Continual war

So my Sire from birth

Was mighty and rich among kings of Earth
 Even an Immortal Goddess of the Sea
 Was given him for bride but unlike to Thee
 No bond of sovereign sons for heirs, I only
 Leave my Father in Thessaly alone
 Uncherished while my few allotted years
 I spend bringing trouble on Thee and tears
 But—for ceaseless laments bring no relief
 To mourner or mourned—stay awhile Thy grief
 I give thee Thy Son's body 'tis the due
 Of courage iron thine and heart as true
 Lives there a man of trials like to Thine
 Spirit so stout as to have pierced the line
 Of the Greek host, and looked me in the face—
 Me slayer of the foremost of thy race !

" Nay sighed Priam Above me I would, must
 While Hector lies unburned in the dust '
 Take Ransom grant the Body let me go
 I would be alone with It, and my woe !

Stern the rejoinder

' Bargain not with me !

If I give it is that I pity Thee
 And obey Heaven shouldst Thou the Body take,

Imagine not I yield for Hector's sake.
Beware lest grief wake grief, and I lift hands
Against my Suppliant, and God's commands."

Priam kept silence; and Achilles bade
That the Dead should be washed, anointed, clad
In cloak and shroud, out of the old man's sight;
Watchful he that no spark should chance to light
Smouldering embers; then, he himself laid
The body on its bier, and knelt and prayed
Pardon of his Friend's Shade if now he gave
The Slayer's corpse the honours of a grave!

Finally, they supped—with high courtesy,
Royal each, in his equal's company.
Elder admiring the younger, in men
A God; Achilles Priam's air serene
And gracious, with his converse bright as sage.
Reflecting a king's life, from youth to age.
No fear that his host, as they talked and ate,
Seeing a Ghost might slay him where he sat;
As little doubt, when he had asked a truce
For Hector's funeral, that oath of Heav'n
Was not more binding than the pledge given:
"Bury Thy Son; so long there shall be peace!"

Next, to rest, and brave still; though Hermes broke
The tired old man's sleep, put, each in its yoke.
Horses and mules, and drove him through the night
And slumbering Camp, till they came in sight
Of swift Xanthus. There Hermes passed from view,
Leaving safe the company to pursue
Its wailing way along, with its Dead, won
By a hero's love for a hero son.

CANTO XXII

RETURN

REQUIEM

COUNTING minutes for her Sire's due return
 Cassandra climbed Pergamos with the Morn.
 Far away—not prophesy this but love—
 She recognized her Father as he drove
 And 'Him on the bier

Hark! truth multiplied

By a soul which flew with it far and wide
 Lo! Hector! Ye have seen him oft in joy
 Of conquering for her come back to Troy
 Histen now all to hail him once again,
 Never more will ye meet him on the Plain
 The City heard at once as with a leap,
 At Hector's name it started up from sleep
 Nor man, nor woman in the great town missed—
 Its Hero at the Gate—to keep the trust
 So home he returned with for exultation,
 A people weeping bitter tears yet glad
 In faith his Shade would hover o'er his tomb
 And even still prevail against Troy's doom
 Within the Hall of State the Body lay
 And the minstrels chanted their vaunting lay

Of triumphs by the Dead o'er the Greek foe.

But as music paused in its martial flow,

Women's voices would a last message send

To Husband and Father, to Son, to Friend :

"Dead!" moaned Andromache, clasping the loved head.

Warming the cold cheeks with the tears she shed ;

"And Troy dead too, its manhood ! Who defied

Achilles but thyself ?—and Thou hast died !

As for us women—our lot without Thee ?

What else but slavery across the sea ?

And thy child's ? to serve a hard lord, or die.

Hurled from a tower by some enemy.

One of many sore at deeds Thou hast done,

Who would avenge Thy might on baby son.

Ah ! to feel the touch of a dying hand,

Treasure dying words to ponder in a strange land !"

"Dead ! of my Sons the dearest !" and the cry—

A Mother's deepened into agony—

"Dead ! why say more ? Achilles in his ire

Mangled Thee, a tribute to his Friend's pyre.

Did thy sears stir therein one gasp of breath ?

And now—for Gods loved Thee—that in Thy death

The flesh keeps almost its bloom, dew-soft, whole.

What have I of my Child but Body without Soul ?"

"Dead !" sorrowed Helen : "And among you all

Who like me laments—longs more to recall ?

Since Paris wiled me twenty years have passed—

Would I had then died ! and from first to last

When have I not met hate from tongue or eyes ?

I know all shudder at me, and despise—

All, but Thy Father and Thou'

All would fear

To utter a harsh word when Thou wert near
Grief for Thee is for Me what hope to find
Living soul so gentle chivalrous kind'

Nine days Mount Ida's forest and the Plain
Ring with thud of axes the creaking train
Of ox wains timber laden

On the tenth morn

From the Palace where it had lain was borne
The Body and with weeping and with pride
In him whom dead as live all glorified
Set upon the pile where Spirit might gain
Release from Flesh a burden now and pain
As the flame died kinsmen with tears and groans
Gathered into a gold urn the white bones
Placed it in a grave they had dug and crowned
The whole with rocks a monumental mound
Then returned to Troy, to feast at the cost
Of Priam fellow mourner more than host

FAREWELL!

*So, our Farewell to Hector! and to Troy Farewell
"By Homer!" Hector gone. He had not heart to tell
How Achilles died—how Troy and King Priam fell!*

THE ODYSSEY

THE ODYSSEY

GREEKS in the youth of their literature and of literary criticism assumed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to be by one Bard. The co-existence of two poetic imaginations, each extraordinary, would have seemed to them incredible. For differences in feeling style and workmanship they had an obvious explanation. The *Odyssey* on its face was the creature of the Bard's age. An easy answer at a later stage was that no argument could be founded by one side or the other on the circumstances of either poem's composition. Except for vaguest tradition, merest legend, nothing was or is known of the authorship of the *Iliad*. For all that the world has ever been aware unless for the impetus the soaring that itself may have been inspiration's final flight.

Had the unity of authorship been incontrovertible the difficulties in dealing with the merits of the *Odyssey* would have been increased. The conception of the plot in each Epic is altogether dissimilar. For a large part of the *Iliad* Achilles sulks invisible. In spirit he always is actively present. Attention is concentrated on him and his moods. The *idea* of the poem is a series of perils

to be encountered. Room had to be kept for variety in the results. Curiosity must be strained almost to breaking point. Fancy and literary art were required, and needed economizing for success. Even indignation: for there are times when, in the blinding of the Cyclops, revenge is glorified into virtue. As a whole, the *Odyssey* is a triumph of romance and adventure. It was the proverbial infinity of resource in the Ithacan of the *Iliad* which recommended him for the second Epic's Hero. I am myself disposed to doubt if personally its minstrel admired him. Though he does his duty by him in the way of investing him with attractive circumstances, such as regrets for old comrades, at their annihilation whether by the half-dozen or shipfuls, how unlike the Bard's bearing towards the grief of Achilles for Patroclus. There it is whole devotion of a superior Self. Homer may have been blind. No blind minstrel is seen, and heard, singing the *Iliad*.

Freed from invidious comparisons, not from generous emulation, the *Odyssey* will be pronounced a noble poem, deserving well to stand by the *Iliad*'s side. Compare it with poetical romances; none is its superior; which is its equal? Chaucer's "*Canterbury Tales*" may, for some of the mackerel-lined contents, stand by its side, though not pretending to originality, or vying in sweetness of diction. Spenser's "*Faerie Queene*" is in theme nobler, and exceeds it in grandeur of thought, though far and away duller. Under whose, what names, in the same class has any country in ancient or modern Europe produced its equal? Then, in special features, boldness of touch, sweep, and swoop, when, in metre, were a storm, a horror, a butchery, by Lastrygon, Cyclops, Scylla so almost cruelly painted? A brave

romance—and so matter of fact? A suspicion seems never to have occurred to the Bard that any apology could be expected for the quick succession of marvels even an avowal that they were marvels as of a power in Phœcean ships to dispense with helmsman and rudder since they knew the thoughts and minds of men and the geography of Earth's cities and lands. Odysseus not of a trustful character accepts the claim as of course and sleeps on whole voyage on its faith.

Concentration of interest is a special characteristic of the *Iliad*. The flood is directed to the glorifying of one supreme hero. Other poets have striven with the same aim. None as in the *Iliad* have realized their object. It is almost as if he of the *Odyssey* had made the contrary his ambition. As I have intimated he does not always interest. The future is not disastrous. In compensation multifariousness distinguishes the delightful entertainment. Each fresh scene if one now and then lags is sure to be sufficiently relieved by another. For old readers and admirers there will always be from each recommencement in studying the poem another attraction. They will have been waiting for the re-entry of Nausicaa. Nausicaa may have raised up rivals for herself in dramas, masques, pastorals, occasional verse but she has no superiors. The *Odyssey*, for a vast number of its admirers though scintillating with flashes of genius is for the five books before her entrance a mere ante-chamber where they await her appearance. The subsequent seventeen have been a period of such solace as they can find in the charm of her brief and grave maidenly farewell. I doubt if Helen on the Walls of Troy, the world's Queen of Beauty, presents so adorable

THE ODYSSEY

The *Odyssey* is a poetical narrative of the adventures of the king of the little island of Ithaca in his voyage home from conquered and burnt Troy. On his way he lost his ship and crew in a tempest raised by the Sun God in wrath for their impious feast during the sleep of Odysseus on the God's pet cattle. Cautless Odysseus was tossed on the Isle of Ogygia. The love of Calypso which he did not return detained him for seven years until Athena obtained the resumption on a raft he constructed of his journey home. A tempest raised by Poseidon threw him on the Phæacian shore. There as Athena had arranged he was clothed fed and put in the way of introduction to the Court of the kingdom by Nausicaa child of its king and Queen. She was on the shore mistress of a grand Palace laundry expedition ending in a game of ball. A charming idyll which but for Penelope might have been a love scene. In due course inclusive of a visit to the Royal Gardens of Aleinous Odysseus wins the admiration of the entire Court, without joining in its sports proves by the extraordinary cast of a rock his easy mastery in all and finally is won over by the king to reveal himself and narrate the wonders of his travels.

THE PRISONER OF LOVE

A cave befitting a Goddess, where she
Who sat there had a right as such to be
By a fire of cedar Calypso plied
Weaving wool a gold shuttle at her side
In a grove without homed birds sea and land
Hallowed they, trained to obey her command
A vine trellised the cave and four bright jets
Nursed sparkling meadows of sweet violets
Long she had loved Odysseus, fought despair
Hoped at last she would be repaid her care
Wondered how long patience like hers would spend
A ceaseless siege and never reach an end
For himself—love her—he should share her bliss
Be her own—and Immortal with a kiss
Alas! Love! Seven years he did but groan
All day as she knew wandering alone
On the rocks of the melancholy shore
Longing to start for his own land once more
Pallas long had sought to end the exile
Of Odysseus in Ogygia's isle
Gods Troy's friends opposed at length her chance
came
And Zeus sent Hermes His will to proclaim
The nymph ached less Hermes was there to part
Her from her love than from an untouched heart

Almost for herself it was a release,
 As when the death peals for a soldier cease.
 Him too. But for Poseidon's frown, or word.
 Ithaca's rugged isle had hailed its lord ;
 And the bar to his return for past years,
 Had been his fond Mistress's smiles and tears.

Content Odysseus He was a freed slave.
 Found it sufficient rest to hear the wave
 Lapping, though for seventeen days he steered.
 Till—sea-shadowed, Phæacia's hills appeared.
 Then at once, lashed by winds south, north, east, west.
 The waters tossed him wildly on their breast.
 Poseidon wished him ill : for Troy in part ;
 Walls wrecked by him were dear to the God's heart ;
 Most for a hurt, we shall hear, he had done.
 Though in self-defence, rightful, to a son.

At last ! among rushes, by the stream's edge,
 Formless, almost speechless, he climbed a ledge.
 Thence stumbled to a wood ; there scooped a bed
 Under olives, wild, tame, of leaves they'd shed.
 The third day this on the sea, or beneath.
 Of a wrestle Odysseus won with death.
 He had despaired. Brave despair ; yet fought still.
 Death he feared not, if that had been Fate's will ;
 Though better, have been struck in battle down,
 Heir, dead, of imperishable renown.
 Than to have withered in Calypso's arms.
 Unwilling victim of Immortal charms.

NAUSICAA

II pp 10 17

SPACIOUS Hyperia had been of old
 Phœacian, but the Cyclopes hold
 The borders an insolent warlike race
 Freebooters wanting in all human grace
 Tired out at length Phœacians agreed
 With Nausithoos following his lead
 To settle down in Scheria an isle
 Where Nature never will forget to smile
 When their king grand builder was called by Fate
 His son-in-law followed as wise and great

In a Palace chamber—for watch and ward
 Beside the door two fair hand maids on guard—
 Slept Nausicaa King's daughter by birth
 In spirit and form from Heaven not Earth
 To her dreaming appeared Athena here
 As child of brave Odysseus the Sleeper's peer
 Playmate and the mandate she came to bring
 Was just to be swift with the sweet Spring

Up slung bed 'a day to be astir
 With the fresh dawn and above all for her
 Marriageable like you! Our young Chiefs sue
 A throng for your hand their Princesses you
 Will be pledged and the wedding garments—where?

Bursting the presses—precious, rich, and fair;
 But for wear? Impossible! Let us wend
 Our way, though too far, with toil at the end.
 A trudge for us and the maids. Rise, and pray
 The King for mules to take us on our way."

No ally like Pallas: brings weal from woe,
 And warns how near is high estate to low.
 Trouble She disregards so She may mend
 The tangled circumstances of a friend.

Nausicaa sought her Parents: a loom
 The Queen plied—thread of Tyre: the Council-room
 Called the King: but both granted the request.
 Though cause of urgency—suppressed—was guessed.
 So—the day still young—a glad start was made.
 The dream-girl, be sure, in the cavalcade—
 The Princess laid the whip on. Where the flood
 Breaks into deep pools, clear, and free from mud.
 They halt, unharnessing the team, to rove
 In search of the wild thick grass that mules love.
 The wagon was unladen, and the whole
 Company washed, and scrubbed, with heart and soul:
 Working until nothing remained there more
 Than to spread to dry on the pebbly shore.
 Next, they bathed, oil not wanting, giv'n to use
 By Queen Arcte in a golden cruse;
 Then dined, wine in plenty, and dainty fare;
 For 'twas a rich folk with no call to spare.
 The meal done, music, when the echoes rang
 To the air that the Mistress leading, sang.
 Nor this the end; for Pallas not content

Without seeing that Odysseus should be sent
 Under guidance to the King's presence moved
 The Princess to a pismire the girls loved
 She flung a ball All else forgot but though
 Wain and mules were ready yet to aid
 Swayed the game As when Artemis among
 Her sylvan nymphs a benighted tall throng
 More fair she head taller on Pnyx gets
 Or Erymanth shall rouse sulky boar fleet
 Stag, to Iatone's pride such as survived
 By her Mother might now have been the Mud

Nausicaa threw with such force the ball,
 As to miss the handmaid who let it fall
 Into a deep pool and therat a shout
 That woke Odysseus forth he came in doubt
 Women were these who fled as he came near
 And well might they view that he seemed with fear—
 Clad in nought but leafage bedaubed with grime
 Eyes lions blazing ravenous for crime
 Only the Princess moved by Pallas stood
 Brave too a King's daughter she by her blood
 Much he revolved—approach—clasp by the knee
 Nay a young maiden—what if she should flee?
 Best weost as Royal Save Delos where—
 Phœbus gift—Nature is immune from care
 A young palm tree saw I such perfect form
 Least now if ever wreck battered by storm
 Dare I approach Yet seen since last I set
 Foot on land was the twentieth Nor yet
 As my ills be over How hope a Queen
 See man in me such as I have been?
 The first of thy people I address,
 Give me some rag to hide my nakedness!

In return be thine a home where each heart,
 Wife's, and husband's, shall have an equal part.
 Nothing so precious can the Gods bestow
 As entire agreement between the two."

"We judge not," the reply, "by accidents of ill,
 Zeus distributes Fortune at His own will.
 All have to bear; they must; and thou wilt find,
 As trained to endure, Phæacians kind.
 No suppliant is ever left in want
 Of clothes, or whatever we else can grant."

Meanwhile, as the pair talked, prepared for flight
 Quaked the handmaids; for he was a dour sight.
 Their Lady rebuked them: "Stop! Whence alarm?
 Heaven loves us; whence mortals that would harm?
 Know ye not we Phæacians abide
 Apart at the limit of the sea-tide.
 None hostile venture here; just some poor stray
 That Zeus pities, would help upon his way.
 Choose a sheltered pool; be he bathed, and clad."
 Modest, as one of gentle blood he bade
 The maids stand back; meanwhile Athena brought
 Arts Divine to heal hurts that storms had wrought.
 At her breath, taller, statelier to view,
 He shewed; and She caused his head to renew
 Hyacinthine locks, as Vulcan will fold
 Sheeny silver in crust of ruddy gold
 A new Being released from the waves' weight.
 Nausicaa, gazing, to herself, cried:
 Happy woman whom such woos for his bride!
 "Quick," the Princess cried: "spread ye meat and
 drink!
 Then Home; to learn what may my Parents think."
 But with ~~anxiety~~, a meal without delay

One watering a legion, trees and seeds ;
 Another for as endless Palace needs,
 The whole, a marvel to him—due to laws—
 Nature and men—working as in one cause !

But by this time he was “ within the court
 Of the Palace. Silence was of import.
 Had been hunted : “ the people had no love
 Of strangers : deemed all motives urged to rove.
 Themselves ! to be ev'rywhere ; aboard, swift
 As bird or arrow, was Poseidon's gift.”
 Heaven saved against risk : It shed a dim
 Twilight around the Guest, unknown to him.
 Then he recalls, from the Princess crewhile,
 A warning—plain enough to woman's guile—
 “ 'Twould best—though Aleinous reigned—betide
 To win first the Queen to be on his side.”

THE UNKNOWN GUEST

ALONF he had reached a recess unseen,
Wherein stood the Thrones of the King and Queen
He clasped Arete's knees as in a cloud
All saw heard as a stranger prayed aloud

Behold great Queen thy suppliant ! hear Thou
And the King ! These also to whom I bow
Guests at thy Royal board !

May the Gods give
Happiness on Earth long as ye shall live
And to leave house and goods each to his heirs
That boons fallen to you may still be theirs
I pray for you your homes pity ! return
Me to mine to dear ones whom long I mourn !

Ceasing he abased himself to the ground
In the hearth's dust and silence full around
Old Echemus broke it to recall
The king as to his duty, most of all,
Of welcoming strangers within his gate
Before inquiry into wants and state
Alcinous accepted the rebuke
A gracious host at once he rose and took
The suppliant by the hands with kind words
Pledging aid when to morrow met the lords

He feared mistrust :

“ Nay.” cried the King : “ not so :
Thou mightest be our son-in-law ; but go.
As such thy desire is. And now to sleep.
A new barque shall bear thee across the Deep.”

The Elders summoned voted the request
Of the Sovereign—who backed it with a feast
For one nameless on whom Pallas bestowed
Majesty of a King, if not a God.
A galley was launched, and blood largely shed
Of Victims, whereon the courtiers fed.
Blind Demodocus was Bard : while he sang
The Stranger caught the theme as the strings rang.
’Twas his debate with Achilles. He wept
Behind his hood. Alcinous who kept
Watch on him, noting some nerve jarred, proclaims
The banquet’s end, and to begin the Games.
In Hall supreme, outside Odysseus held
Eyes still ; but young men tire to be excelled
In public regard by one strange to sport ;
For that seems life to members of a Court.
Euryalus, Laodamas—a son
Of the King—concerted to work upon
Their belief he was a merchant whose art
Was but to carry goods from mart to mart ;
A man of peace, with sturdy limbs enough
For oars and sails, not war, or play as rough.
Stern retort : “ In no mood for pastimes he ;
For nothing but his home beyond the sea.
He allowed no rudeness but from a host—
Laodamas was licensed—might taunt, boast.
Pretty lads—Euryalus—his like—ware !
Provoke me ? See what I can do : then dare ! ”

With the word and a leap, he whirled and threw
 O'er the quoit ground a rock, it whizzed and flew
 Beyond all the marks for extreme east
 ' Thus, he cried sport of one chained to a mast
 Luryalus, astonished as the rest
 Asked pardon of the taunt he had addressed
 Offering—requit for a sharp word—
 In its scabbard a silver hilted sword
 The Stranger graciously received the grant
 Hoped the Giver might never feel its want
 War worn, wave buffeted, poor wreckage thrown
 Naked on a strange shore nameless unknown
 Was recognized as king,

more than all

He won a prickly heart beyond recall
 Hearing twas the of his voyage home
 In the great hall ^{where} for him to come
 Nausicaa, bade him ^{go} to far land
 Remember she raised him from a strange strand
 The supper was served and a herald led
 Demodocus where the Bard leaned his head
 Against a tall pillar Of the fat chine
 The Hero's portion part of a huge swine
 Odysseus sent the Bard most prayed he should
 Take for his theme th Achæan Horse of Wood
 And the Bard told who planned manned it, in such
 wise

Sung that slow tears dropped from one hearer's eyes
 Almost twas as if he turned Trojan saw—
 Dying for his home—his wife with bare raw
 Shoulders being at the spear's sharp point, broke
 Before his face to endure a slave's yoke
 Vicious, none else—for he sat near—

Had marked how, spite of self, tear fell on tear.
 Courteously he bade the Minstrel lay
 His harp aside: and "would not their Guest say—
 For no less than 'Brother' the name he bore—
 His fortune's course, fair, rough, from shore to shore?
 Above all, Troy? decreed by Gods and Fate
 Subject for song—wert Thou associate
 With its sorrows by marriage, friendship good
 And fond a tie as any one of blood?
 Needs must we know thine, or thy country's name;
 Else, where carry Thee—how back to the same?
 Our ships have no pilots or helms, but ken
 Without speech the thoughts and the minds of men.
 Darkness, clouds alarm not our sailors; they
 Have lost, they boast, no craft by night or day.
 Spite of Poseidon's rumoured threat, in sight
 Of the Town, sink a ship: thus prove His might."
 A hush—King, and Twelve Princes, held their breath;
 The whole Hall throughout was as still as death.
 Perhaps, Nausicaa listened apart
 Where none could guess the throbblings of her heart.

In command of twelve ships besides his own gathered from among the Achæan Fleet Odysseus had sailed homewards. A first disaster arose from the strong wines of Ismarus which caused him a loss of six seamen from each vessel. He stayed awhile at Lotus land striving against its lulling slumbers. Again a delay on the outskirts of Cyclopland. They had seen a high building with its inhabitant a giant. On him he decided to pay a visit with twelve companions and a goat-skin of the strongest wine. At nightfall a hideous giant Polyphemus would drive his flock into the great barn which he closed with a rock beyond human strength to dislodge. Two of the seamen eight in all he devoured while the rest shuddering grazed. Odysseus known to him as Noman decided to blind him after intoxicating with the strong Ismarus wine. The ghastly vengeance is worked on the monster. Escaped the hero and his crew spent a month with Tolus King of the Winds. On their regretted departure with all contrary winds imprisoned in a bladder the sailors in the belief that it held treasure cut it open and from being within sight of their own fields were hustled back to the Isle of Æolus who refused harbourage. A visit to the Læstrygons in their cannibal citadel, was a horror whence the one ship of Odysseus found itself

On the Isle Egea where dwells
Four haired Circe, mistress renowned of spells

WINE OF ISMIRUS

THE LOTUS EATERS

POLYPHEME

IN 1. 24

Thus adjured the Guest answered 'Thou wouldst
know

My story ? 'Tis a tale of endless woe
Where shall I begin ? In this Hall has one
Not heard of Odysseus' deeds he has done ?
And how Troy fell ? Sailing homeward I moored
Off Ismirus night with rich spoil on board
Have sailed safe away had there not been wine
In Towns without the Priests' at the Divine
Grove whom and whose for its fragrance rare
And its gold treasure I agreed to spare
Thirteen Greek galleys were in my own charge
I signalled for sea crews dispersed at large
Had to pay for their cups a bloody cost
And sail with six comrades out of each lost
Next storms from Zeus nine days and Lotus land
Its people are no murder plotting band
Simply they offer sweet flowers sweet fruit
No more But accept and henceforward mute
Guests live, forgetting home and hope, task hard

To force them weeping, with forlorn regard,
 Under the benches bound : leaving behind
 A hushed, stilled atmosphere, sighs its sole wind ;
 Where the joy is just to be unaware
 Of pain, and agony to feel a care

On an isle we heard from the other shore
 Voices ; but at dawn I bade twelve ships moor
 Afar, while it sufficed for mine to dare
 Make trial of what sort the natives were.
 Rowing we saw a cave, roof laurel-spread.
 Beside, slept sheep and goats. About its head
 A hall, raised high of stones, dug from a pit,
 With tall pines and oaks, joists to bind and fit.
 In the shade dozed among the dozing sheep
 A monster and most ruffianly in sleep ;
 Superhuman—peak measuring with none.
 Dwarfing proud heights—this Brute Thing dwelt alone.
 At sight I bade the rest, beaching the boat.
 Keep it ready, to have at once afloat.
 Of meat I took such as I had aboard,
 With Priest Maron's wine, strongest he had stored,
 For what need might arise, an ample skin ;
 Then, with twelve chosen men, I entered in.
 First, we explored the Cave though in such fright
 Were my comrades as to have taken flight
 Forthwith—with such spoil—whether made or live—
 As we could bear to our ship, or drive.
 I forbade ; hoping gifts, fair words at least ;
 Soon to repent, when in rolled the grim beast,
 With on its back, supper fuel, a weight
 Which he tumbled down by the open gate.

Stunned, for I shared the terror at the din,
 We all rushed to the cave's last limits in.

Parting his flocks he left the males outside
 The Hall barring by a rock for door slide—
 Scarcely twenty two teams would stir—then each lamb
 Or kid set for suckling by its own dam
 Dairying done he leisure had to mark
 The fugitives there huddled in the dark
 In answer to his questions I had sought
 To awe him by stating that we had wrought
 Troy's fall though adding craftily a tale
 That our spoils had been shipwrecked in a gale
 My warning that Zeus will avenge a guest
 Brought but a scoff and a cannibal feast
 With a rush upon my comrades he seized two
 Puppy wise dashing brains out at a blow
 Rending limbs lion like—rage without soul
 Swallowing raiment, blood entrails bones whole
 I or us what but cry to Zeus and to weep
 With vain de pite as he lay in dull sleep?
 Revenge? Stah—we might cut the vital cord
 Cut a stone block—sever that by a sword?
 So, sooner or later prisoned inside
 That black dungeon to have pined and have died
 Night and no counsel till for his morn's meat
 Two more crushed one th' other for him to eat
 Div' wrath then stirred wits He went An olive
 wood
 Pole he dried for a club and there it stood
 Parching by th' fold I chose and cut off
 All but a fathom That I thought enough
 And sharpened Back he but—new made it eve—
 He did not on this one special night leave
 The males without He drove them to the cave,
 Cloating on the dirt meal he longed to have

Then lifting the great rock, ingress to bar,
 As if it the merest shore pebble were,
 He milked and brought ewes their young in due
 course

As tenderly as women their babes nurse.
 Next, to his cannibal feast; two live, raw
 Mass, human flesh, sacrificed to his maw.
 I offered a full goblet, a long draught,
 From the Ismarus goat-skin we had brought,
 Praying him in return to let us go.
 Fast he quaffed, craving more, pledging, if so,
 A return. Three times I brimmed the vast cup,
 Which three times greedily did he drink up.
 He asked my name. 'No-man,' said I; and he:
 "For thanks I'll eat thee last of the company.
 On his back the foul glutton fell, supine.
 Slumberous, subdued by the potent wine.
 Our stroke was arranged; four men held the pole
 Kept hot in embers; point like a live eal.
 All but aflame; and dressed he for his rack.
 See! the coarse, thick throat bent helplessly back;
 The eye, furiously glaring, though glazed,
 At the four Greeks poised stick that half blazed.
 Ah! and a hissing! it is in! Halloo!
 I from above turn it to, turn it fro!
 The blood the point thirsts for boils, bubbles, steams,
 Round eyeball's roots crackling! Ah! and the screams
 As he plucked the stick forth! Churlish though he,
 Hearers of shrieks forced from his agony,
 Gathered from their highlands at the weird sound
 To the cave of the Hall, and stood around:
 "Ail you?" They, "by fraud, or by arms of Man?"
 He: "Noman." They: "What use scolding God's plan?"

None can shun a disease that Zeus may send
Pray to thy Sire Poseidon He might mend
Thus left he groped took away the big stone,
Sitting there to crotch who else would have gone
Fool to hold me such and this my design
The rams lodged by a happy freak within
I had at night stilly with a rough thread—
Osiers he used to collect for his bed—
Fastened three abreast the one on each side
To share the load the centres in the ride
For myself I chose King Ram that came slow
Last it pleased Cyclops to think for his woe

Couldst but track me 'Noman' To crush his bones !
Listen as spluttered his brains on the stones !

His retort was a huge rock that all but
Would descending upon our ship have cut
Her in twain whereat with a bitter taunt,
I gave name parentage by way of vaunt
He employed the news to pray if willed Fate
I should return it might be lone and late !
For himself while he deemed us in his reach
Casting in vain a whole cliff from the beach

KING ÆOLUS

LÆSTRYGNIA

CIRCE

V, pp. 31-5

WITH oars, starting at dawn. we reached the land
 Over which King Æolus holds command.
 Lord of Air. he orders thence each wind
 To rage, or be still, as he is inclined.
 It floats at his will, though with me his guest.
 For my convenience it stayed at rest.

A whole month. as right welcome, there we spent ;
 If longer, Æolus had been content.
 He liked to hear of Troy. th' Achæan fleet.
 Questioning till he had the tale complete.
 When I would proceed, and inquired my way,
 He took friendly care that I should not stray ;

Rebuffed, six long days, nights, we sailed and rowed.
 Period of memories dyed in blood.
 Can I evoke one with no single trait
 Recalling a gallant flash to repay.
 A brutish world this at its bounds, where dwell
 The Læstrygons in their steep citadel
 Of Lamos, who rate strangers as chance meat,
 Windfalls for savages to kill and eat.

Under impulse Divine my one ship found
 Herself in a harbour as thither bound
 It was on the Isle Æta where dwells
 Fair haired Circe mistress renowned of spells
 Petes sister Perse's and the Sun's birth
 Grandchildren of Ocean that circles Earth
 I speak of things we learned not that we knew
 For our elvish life was but a draught of rue

In the forest or beyond smoke arose
 It was agreed let half as the lot chose
 Start first thither it Eurylochus led
 My brother in law whom my sister wed
 Starting first a strange tale his in the wood
 A Palace—for watch dogs wolves and lions—stood
 So well trained the beasts as our sailors came
 They gambolled gaily round—they were so tame
 A Lady the while within her own room
 Sang doing work immortal at her loom
 But our men were not rudely made to wait
 They shouted and Himself was in the gate
 Praying their entrance All even discreet
 Pokes the trap caught set for their feet
 Thus much Eurylochus saw Of the rest
 Part from inarticulate cries he guessed
 Adding details later as that with me
 Cheese honey and wine She mixed drugs to steal
 Human semblance away turn men to swine
 Yet so as to recollect and rhyme
 A patchwork story whence I could but tell
 That Greeks my Greeks the sport were of a spell
 Played them by a 'Goddess Witch' what you
 will
 Rumoured to do wandering seamen ill

The suspicion roused in me rage extreme
 Beyond deeds of cannibals. Polypheme.
 I snatched sword, bow ; bade Eurylochus guide,
 When, weeping he lagged, suffered him to bide.
 So, alone, I went : had climbed a wild crest,
 When Hermes stayed me on, else, a mad quest.
 Unless for the herb "moly" that He gave :
 All potent, as He pledged Himself, to save ;—
 For I, as armed, I reached the gate, and cried.
 Was courteously brought at once inside.
 Richly regaled, throned on a silver chair,
 Then hustled with : "To the stys, and lie there !"
 I rushed, sword drawn, nor would relent, till when
 She had restored my comrades to be men.
 Thenceforth She dealt nobly by me and mine ;
 Supplied dishes of all sorts, honeyed wine.
 Purple coverlets, gold and silver plate, hot
 Baths causing toil and grief to be forgot.
 Service by Nymphs of grove and fountain, elves
 Guessing wants not e'en felt by our own selves

HIDES

VI pp 36-41

A WHOLE year gone at last in idlesse spent
And my ship's company in discontent
Reminded me—I Circe—that we come
From Troy should not thus linger far from home
Circe held me not back only first bide
Sail to Hides there consult the shade
Of Tiresias Prophet old and blind
Who—Persephone's boon—kept a whole mind
Such pilgrimage—bare thought—plunged me in tears
The crew obeyed me did not hide its fears
My Goddess inspired a north wind that bore
Us to the River Ocean On its shore
Dwell the Cimmerians nor cheerful morn
Nor serene sunset know they but forlorn
Haunt life's one night Then to old Ocean's bank
Returning I dug with my sword a fink
That blood there from the sheep I slew—a pair—
Might remind those drinking whose ghosts they were
Sorrow first of all to have to refuse
Access to a draught Flax nor my crew's
Youngest Heav with wine he slept to taste
The cool on the high Palace roof In haste,
At the loud call aboard he fell beneath

Forgetting the Ladder, and met his death,
 The next to be buried my own Mother dear,
 Approached, but gave place hence to the seer
 Tirias, who at my pray'r unrolled
 All my coming life to its latest fold.
 Eventful it will be, as it has been;
 But just an accident in Time's long scene.
 Time rests upon Hades, ascends, descends;
 Ever, in its ages, starts there, there ends.
 Persephone had published, that Below
 Passed One could tell whence sprang they who ruled
 Now.

Whispers, a hurricane, stirred Pluto's realm.
 Threatning but for the tank to overwhelm.
 A vision of fair women; Gods and knights;
 Tyro, Alcmene, Clymene; delights,
 And griefs as strange; sieges of Heaven; Love
 Fraternal, that, unless 'twere blessed Above,
 Could not joy, and Hate neither heart could feel
 Eased till the other bled to deadly steel!

But I tire you. Time too for me to sleep;
 For I must to-morrow be on the Deep."

Silence: a charm had fallen upon all;
 The rapture of the Tale possessed the Hall.
 Arcte pointed, broke it not:

"My Guest
 He was, is yours become, and of your best
 Is worthy!"

So all, chief the King, agreed:
 "The night is young; speak of thyself; each deed,
 Stratagem, resource, suffering, and care;
 Thy comrades at Troy, how they fared, or fare."
 None the Hero to scorn for deeds he told

Good hearers nor boons from the rich in gold
 Storms had sunk Troy's spoil home would be repaid
 By Phœcia in the gifts she made

So, he resumed

Regarding it as just
 The boon to some untimely gone to dust
 Queen Persephone of Her grace now brought
 Warriors by whose side myself had fought
 Agamemnon first His lamenting Ghost
 Narrated how he Captain of the Host
 Was slain as an ox in the shambles life
 Foully stolen by an adulterous Wife
 Alas ! how comfort ! could not even say
 If Oristes saw still the light of day

' Your wife chaste he granted But woe wives
 lies !

Mine troubled not to close my dying eyes !

Sad we parted

Achilles Ajax son

Of Odysseus Patroclus followed on

With Antilochus Ah ! wonder that took

Them ! cried they ! What would not Odysseus
 brook

Rather than resign his will ? Yet, what led

Alive below among impotent dead ?

Shadows these ! replied I Dead as alive

They obey what laws may Achilles give !

Words — the retort Death can be nought but
 death

Hero and Glory — weigh they more than breath ?

Coddess born ! a mere phrase — that like the rest —

' Mother ! who ne'er clasped the dead to her breast !

Oh ! could I but tread earth beneath my feet,

Be mipped by the frost and scorched by the heat,
 To feel blood red and real course in each vein,
 Joy with joy, true joy, ache with pain true pain
 Be a hurling, just feel a sun to shure,
 Lent to hastest of churls, wait upon swine,
 Not rout ghost-hoists of Troy, ghost-helm on head,
 While I forget I've lived, know I am dead."

"But of me who am here enough? My Son,
 Neoptolemus - ah, what has he done?"
 "Never behind lingered he, th' mere boy";
 Answered I, "Always in front against Troy,
 While others in the 'Horse' urged long delay,
 He would have burst forth while it still was day."
 No more Æacides grieved, the long stride
 That bore him away attested his pride.

My heart had an ache could not thus be eased;
 Vain my hopes; Ajax would not be appeased.
 Next to Achilles, none in arms could boast
 Equal prowess with his in the Greek host.
 But the 'Horse of Wood' won through me the Town;
 No one deed exceeded it in renown.
 O that the Arms had perished before they
 Dimmed the lustre of many a great day!
 I grieve to have left pursuit too soon off,
 Not to have pressed it doggedly enough

Still curious I, save for Trojan jeer:

"An instant, and mark! Gorgo will be here!"

Hasting back in dread, I bade loose, and row,
 Rapid oars, and the river Ocean's flow
 Tossed us to the sea. By night we were borne
 To Ææa. On its beach we slept till morn.

On waking our first duty was to send—
 Discharging a last one—for a dead friend
 To sell trees for a pyre moist with warm tears—
 More—friends fewer—for each that disappears—
 To burn the dead and arms and raise a tomb
 With a column and name saying for whom

Gods and men have done me ill and as well
 Of kindnesses from both have I to tell
 Circe feasted us on meat and rich wine
 Till the sunset then by foresight Divine
 Revealed to me apart how all might come
 Unless through some misdeed back to our home
 At morn our voyage began and the sails
 Filled for the Godless gave favouring gales
 Meantime I warned as at their oars they sate
 How they might baffle death and even Fate
 It was as She said first the Sirens Isle
 We reached and the wind fell Then, fear of
 guile

The men furled sail and took our I with war,
 That sun and my hands soon served to relax
 Closed their ears in their turn they bound me fast
 Upright with many strong ropes to the mast
 As ears closed the crew rowed on a green isle
 They saw Nymphs singing with by them a pile,
 As of bows On these I spent not a glance,
 Only on a loveliness to entrance

Allied to all the ecstasy of song—
 Theme Earth's mystery when the world was young,
 To hums fall how through whom it came—
 'For we are here to sound Odysseus fame'
 I ordered and I prayed to loose my hands
 The crew added tighter and tighter bands

So, one death was escaped ; but not prepared
 Had I for the next traps : I had not dared.
 Charybdis. Scylla are partners : a stroke
 By one shattered nerves : and a second broke.
 See, first, steam ; one billow then, and a roar.
 At which, in a wild panic, every oar
 Flew splashing. True, men believed in my words ;
 And, when I conjured them, obeyed their lord—
 Though who would not quake at portent like this.
 A tide gorged, disgorged, up, down an abyss
 Nought earth-born could face save wild fig that hangs
 O'er Charybdis's den, and plays with her fangs.
 And what use in speeding oars till betwixt
 Her jaws, and Scylla's six necks, on each fixt
 A head's three rows of teeth grinning in each :
 On each—one a mouth—man quivering, and a screech.
 Fool I to hope such monsters would expose
 Themselves to the vengeance of human foes !
 Circe mocked the fancy : yet on the prow
 I stood with two spears, as if farthest throw
 Could have struck into the Cave. Ah ! the pang,
 Appeals, to myself with which the air rang !
 Direct of all my trials on the Deep,
 Such sights, and such sounds—how haunt they my sleep !
 The horror still brooded ; moved me to shun.
 Though bright and green, the Island of the Sun.
 Tiresias and Circe had combined
 To bid us sailing leave this spot behind
 On pain of a sentence without recall
 To the worst of evils that could befall.
 Eurylochus resisted : " Nerves like mine
 Were steel ; there was no toil they would decline.
 Besides, ill winds south west, began at night.

Let them sup and sleep, then sail by morn'g light
Our Lord feared for the Sun God's herds and flocks
They'd swear to hold sacred each sheep and ox
Pist midnight a stiff wind a tempest blew
And for a full month from the south The crew
Had used up Crec's gift and what chance food
Fish and birds hooks supplied from flood and wood
I grieved at the hunger and sore at heart
Had wandered where'er I could be apart
Washing my hands clean I had made my vows
And the Gods shed sweet sleep over my brows
Mist my comrades who had kept their troth
Erewhile abused my doze to break their oath
Vowing once home in Ithaca to raise
A rich Temple to the God When I woke
I smelt in the hot fat our doom In vain I took
Heaven to attest my innocence The Sun
At once had eluded revenge if given none
Had threatened Olympus to stry beneath
And to illuminate the fields of death

Six days of revel and then lulled the gale,
On the next we began once more to sail,
Myself in hope against knowledge—the mast
And skin would moan and creep as the men eat
We'd lost sight of land when lo' a dark cloud
Above a dark sea and straight screamed aloud
The west wind a hurricane that pell mell
Swept cordage into the hold and down fell
The mast It smote the helmsman on the head
And he plunged as a diver leaps but dead
Then a sulphurous bolt was by Zeus hurled
It shook the crew out on the waves and curled
The galley up Keel sides parted A thong

I caught, tied mast, keel : we floated along.
Ah ! terror ! I felt I was being borne
Gulf-wards ' But blest sig ! Not thence to be torn !
I climbed, waiting my turn to keep my way :
And reached Ogygia on the tenth day.
But you know how I with Calypso fared.
Let audience and teller both be spared.

ITHACA AT LAST

P. 46

SILENCE—as if all waited for next word
 Or sleeper from dream that has softly stirred
 At last the party broke up to return
 After brief slumbers with fresh gifts next morn
 Then with more feasting applause and regret
 The Hero was left aboard at sunset
 Fired out he lay mute fearless wise and slept
 Hawk swift purple wave behind the boat kept
 And reached the haven—as Lucifer rose—
 Named from Phœbe's when a fleet might repose
 Close by in a pleasant shadowy cove
 Where the Naiads weave their bright robes and lave
 The crew without disturbing placed the Guest
 On the sand to complete his tranquil rest
 Stored his treasure within and hastened home
 Waking he knew not whither he was come—
 Even wroth as if to an unknown land—
 Might be and betrayed to a robber band
 Examined first his goods and found none lost,
 Though still deemed the region a foreign coast

Readers you know he is home at that stage
 In his long and eventful pilgrimage

Homer—neither—e'er tires; rendered has gone
Beyond the course that I had meant to run.
Resort to the Bard's self, Friends, if you ask
How Troy's Captor fulfilled his whole hard task.

And now at last on his own unrecognized isle in the charge of the ever faithful and amused Athena. The Goddess explains to him the usurpation of his home and goods by a number of suitors of his wife whom Penelope repulses though doubtful of her husband's survival. For safety from their greedy and unscrupulous ferocity Athena disguises him as a ragged low beggar. Ithacæus the swineherd faithful to his memory is hospitable when Telemachus enters the cottage straight off his search for rumours of his Father at the Courts of Nestor and Menelaus. Unknowingly he had escaped a ship set to wreck him by murderous suitors. Telemachus sends Ithacæus to Penelope with tidings of his safe arrival leaving the unrecognized Beggar restored by the Goddess as his miracle of a now recognized Father to concert war to the death against the kitchen pirates. The recognition of Odysseus by the Dog Argos is as pathetic as is the overthrow of the street beggar Iros comic and the massacre of the ignoble fortune hunters even Amphinous a feast of blood! The minstrelsy of the Epic winds up with the manifest intention of the Singer to save material for a future Homeric Cycle, if not Himself.

HESIOD

HESIOD

c. B.C. 850 or 735

A TRANSLATOR'S difficulty in approaching the *Iliad* is a happy sense of impossibility. He desires that his version shall impress this upon readers as has been a result of the attempt upon himself. The first effect of rendering into English verse specimens of Hesiod is discouragement. A translator's natural hope is to earn the gratitude of a public however small by widening its circle of poets. The promise of this from the *Bird of Aesra* is meagre. According to his own confident testimony the Muses had introduced themselves to him feeding his flock on Mount Helicon. By their favour he had been crowned victor at a poetic contest in Puhon. In gratitude he dedicated to them the prize—a tripod. An honest simplicity forbids him to try to show his best fruit and flowers on the surface. His wisdom is apt to be ponderous. I have often felt as if I ought to apologise for truisms.

Early literature if not descriptive of war or adventures is addicted to moralities in the form of apophthegms. Hesiod had a particular incentive to their use in the conduct of a younger brother, Perses, who being at once idle, with an extravagant wife and litigious persecuted him.

with suits before venal judges Being a farmer on a soil not exuberantly grateful, his imagination sought relief in a most elaborate system of superstitions. Let me give a few samples. "Put not the ladle across the bowl," that is, lest the superior resent the intrusion. "Leave not a house in building unfinished," lest a crow alight on it, and croak. Alas, for the terrorism of days! Sometimes a day is a stepmother, less often a mother! How few know that certain days are good. as for "broaching a cask!" Not that a thinker's wisdom occasionally does not flash forth: "Lay by little on little; quickly it will become much"; "Trust a woman on account of her fine dress? trust a cheat!" "Is not Potter jealous of Potter?" "Starve, or dig"; and—when the Muses

Taught me to sing the inexpressible song!

his hearers were such babes as

Not to know how much bigger is half than whole!

Hesiod won his place among poets by singing of the farm, and its life. He has proved his title almost as it were in defiance of his declared theme. A legend of a series of independent human generations may very possibly have been floating about the world before his time. At least he reduced it to words, and invested it with the melody of metre. Through him it has become an element of the world's literature. For the Ages since his own he is its author. When a poet, though it be Virgil himself, sings of the reign of Saturn, the Golden Age, we have to thank old Hesiod. It is the same with a collateral myth, the establishment, almost voluntary, of Chronus—Saturn of the Italians—once Imperial—

in the pastoral calm of the Happy Isles. At all events Hesiod caught it from the ur-during his term of inspiration and wound it into his web. Pindar so far as we know, found it there and ennobled it.

Somehow the texture loose and incohesive of Hesiod's argument lent itself to the inclusion among his verse by no wish on his part of much by no other known authors. Thus the 'Theogony' the 'Shield of Hercules' and a picture of a Boeotian winter have been assigned to him. But a much more extravagant misappropriation is a jest at Olympian Zeus Himself. That however as I found it in quiet unblushing possession, I have not disturbed. The incursion is too comic for me to interfere with quiet board and lodging by Perses's pious brother for the romping rampant cuckoo idyll of Pandora!

WORKS AND DAYS

And, Muses, who in Pieria dwell.
 Daughters of Zeus, His ministers to tell
 Whom He has chosen—His sole will—to raise
 From the dust, or abase for their proud ways.
 From you I learn how long before the birth
 Of Us who now labour upon the Earth.
 It pleased the Olympian Gods to mould
 Men, a race beautiful, as if of gold.
 Their lot—God Chronus then reigned—was to stare.
 As at a play, scenes shifting, without care,
 In Nature's course. No threat of age by rude
 Hints in hands and feet of decrepitude.
 Existence one long festival; work done.
 When pleasure in "breathing" the muscles gone;
 Harvests sure, just as springtide might portend,
 By favour of a God less lord than friend.
 If still mortal they, yet in that soft wise
 Came death as when sleep closes weary eyes!
 Nor is Being for them, when in the grave.
 At an end. Spirits of this Earth they have
 The high duty under Heaven to guard
 Earth's limits of right and wrong, to reward,
 And to chastise, as Kings: as of that race,
 Reading hearts; invisible, ranging space.

To succeed the Golden a second birth
Is called 'Silver' to suggest lower worth
As from hope 'mothering' might manhood bring
And good sense be learned at the apron string
Infancy was a century So great
The want still of self restraint that the race
Of violent deaths fast consumed the whole
By homicide nor left a living soul
In self reproach for bad workmanship Zeus
King now blessed them dead finding elsewhere their
excuse

With this proof that no long pupillage can
Assure wisdom peace to His creation man
Zeus for His next experiment used brass
Brass seemed their limbs and adamant to pass
Into their souls brass housed them for their meat
They killed beasts barley led not them or wheat
Of stout ash their tools but with none outside
To challenge spears inglorious they died
Each a Terror exchanged the sun's gay light
Slain by a brother Terror, for death's night

Unsatisfied not hopeless Zeus again
Set to work creating from His own brain
And heart mixed with Earth's matter Heroes sprung
Oft held Demigods With their deeds air rav'd
Zeus made, then left to follow their own bent
As is His wont and suiting fate's intent.
Of kindred blood Thebes soil drank Helen's flight
Accounted for offshoots of Hero might
Yet died they not all Zeus gave life and rest
At Earth's bounds in the Islands of the Blest
There, beside Ocean's deep eddying pools
In the realm Chronos, once Chief Sovereign rules

They dwell care-free, unless that the year's soil
Shall bear them its three harvests without toil!

A serene future theirs, and in the past
Peace from the base mould in which ours was cast.
Alas! for poor Us of the Iron Age.
Strife ceaseless, yet nought of heroic rage;
No household love, reverence of the old,
Faith in oaths none, all justice to be sold.
Envy rampant, to virtue no good will:
Nay, laud of riot, practice of all ill.
Where can Purity, Nemesis alight
Without a slur upon their robes of white?
Pity me condemned for no fault of mine.
Hopeless of release much as I may pine.
What my quavers against an eagle's claws
And his fierce rush to glut his eaglet's maws!
Madness to nurse the fancy that a song
Can avail against passions of the Strong.

Yet even in an Age of Iron blind
Abettors of wrong and violence find
Justice tracks perjury, and will chastise
Both suitors and Judges who deal in lies.
See! when a City loves the true and just,
Treats as offence to her a breach of trust,
She and hers abide in peace: Zeus holds war
From her borders; fire, famine keep afar.
Her mountains are crowned with tall oaks that give
Mast to her swine, and hollows where bees hive.
She needs not tempt sea's wild storms; her own land
Bears her enough at Nature's glad command.
Tremble, citizens, on whom Zeus hurls down
Bolts shared with lords who have provoked His frown.
Quake, above all, ye on the Judgment seat,

Who dare to trample right beneath your feet
Souls their bodies turned to clay at the word—
Roused from sweet sleep—of their Creator I ord
Return invisible to haunt Earth's Courts
And offer Divine Justice their reports
They number thirty thousand to and fro
Avengers of friendless and wronged they go
Straight up to Justice where upon her throne
By her Sires She judges wrongs as her own

Courts of Law are Temples Zeus there presides
Venal judgments profane them and besides
I encourage lawless strife by crooked ways
With a corrupting lure of idle days
To shun fair rivalry life's honest race
Righteous instinct of the Iron Age—
'Potter against Potter — for Heaven's plan
Is to point out no short cuts for rude man
To his nature's limits just let each limb
Stretch as high as such has been framed to climb
'Tis thus with other beasts might thus have gone
With Man had only he been let alone
Lacking fire he would still have cropped the ground
Gathered such bush and tree fruits as he found
Vines would not have been sunk or vessels built
To cross the seas or blood in fight been spilt
Zeus, who used fire for His thunderbolts hid
It until meddling Promethus slid
A spark inside a hollow stalk and drove
Zeus to punish Man for the Titan's love
With a bitter jest that the plot to lift
Man from the dust would prove a costly gift
Hephaestus by His orders from mud wrought
A virgin as Goddess fair Pallas taught

Delicate embroideries The rare part
 Set Aphrodité was Her own fine art.
 How to shed an atmosphere. as if fain
 Perforce to yield to desire that was pain.
 Last, Zeus charged Hermes : " Let her think no ill
 Of playing a dog if 'twill serve her will ! "
 Obeyed. even bettered. A shy, young maid
 Goddesses. a whole troop. took and arrayed.
 Her skin the Graces with Persuasion vied
 To contrast—ivory and gold : they tied.
 In vain. locks overflowing. while the Hours
 Crowned her with wreaths of ever fresh spring flow'rs ;
 And Pallas. if scorning. valuing them,
 Pointed charms. each. with a blossom. a gem.

Hermes had already breathed life, and speech,
 Interpreting the soul. to overreach.
 Zeus, wroth with Prometheus, the girl designed
 For Epimetheus's bride. In this mind
 He asked the Gods for a trousseau. His plan
 For Earth's trust in Titans to punish Man.
 In a like jealous mood each God a pest
 Gave as a wedding present from " the Blest."
 And, thus endowed, Pandora—thence her name—
 To the brother of wise Prometheus came.
 Enraptured he took the Maid : not the Chest ;
 Minding late the caution : " Ware gifts from {^U
 Blest ! " "

Alas, curious womanhood ! Soon out
 From the box cares first, then a rabble rout.
 Though struck dumb by Zeus. that by day and night
 Roam sea. land. unseen, though themselves with si^{ht}.
 When Zeus as yet was friends with men, the soils f^{ht}.
 Spontaneously fed us without toil.

Afflictions might befall at least a sore
Fear cast not its grim shadow long before
Well for Man Heaven's self now pity felt
While in the chest's rim one comforter dwelt
Zeus stayed His toy from shaking it loose nay
Closed the lid, yet so that forth stole a ray
Fields may ring iron to the spade above
Frown lead skies in brothers' breasts be no love
Poets may harp find none to give ear past
And present alike stretch dead and a waste —
When—heart's warm gloom parts we no longer grope,
Nature ev'n Man are transfigured!

 Hail sunny Hope!

PINDAR

PINDAR

PINDAR is a meteor in the sphere of poetry. Each Ode is a comet. Habitually he soars and sets literature remote and misty problems. The contemptuousness he is eager to display exceeds the haughtiness of Æschylus. Such always he was while he sang on lure at the disposal of riches without regard to the source of usurpers of power, however unscrupulous and oppressive. Every Ode glorifies the buyer as a hero for his wealth, for having reared the swiftest steeds or exhibited the best trained gymnastic abilities. Rapture at the martyrdom of patriotism nowhere is manifest, much at splendour. If I read any motive for an universal resentment it is indignation at a lot in life under patronage which he abhors, scorns and cannot escape.

The result a mighty fancy's struggle with prosaic tasks, is singing in a ceaseless rage. Whatever the possible ailments of his own customer his honest contempt for hypocrites will have found abundant matter outside. A Hellenic public throughout the States of Greece appreciated his temper. As keenly did it we may be sure, admire the poet's learning in Greek legendary lore. It could interpret allusions and supply clues. I have no perplexity in understanding the glory of Greeks in the Odes one and all. In trying to explain the

delight of Moderns I am more at a loss. Tenderness seems to me completely absent, together with melancholy, gaiety, humility, even sweetness—whatever for ordinary, commonplace thoughtfulness and feeling, renders poetry a necessity. At the same time I must admit that if other qualities can make up for the want, Pindar was endowed with some fine substitutes. He holds a high course, seldom, or never, declining, and often rising to sublimity. He despises envy, jealousy, meanness of any sort; and labours to clothe the unimaginable grandly. I have been at pains to select for my examples two poems which, at all events in the original, represent worthily the wide sweep, even the audacity of his vision.

Did ever poet but he take for his avowed theme as in *Olymp. II.* the dignity, the righteousness of money—claim it for a direct avenue to renown in mortal life, again, and again, renewed? Nor for human rewards alone, but a pledge of eternal bliss? He hurls his thunderbolt of an Ode at the jealous bards—perhaps even Simonides and Bacchylides—who envied him his successful Muse; sneered at him as venal, bribed to laud a robber of his State's freedom! Not that he cared. Honestly for him wealth was a force, a gift of Heaven, crowning the will to do the Gods' work on Earth, and he paid by repose in the Happy Isles. As he chants, he is not bard alone, but Priest and Prophet!

Then, the Fourth Pythian, commonly most admired of the whole of his work extant! It also is inscribed to a Greek sovereign, who had retained him to sing his Chariot's victory. Not ethical as is "The Tyrant of Agrigentum's Ode," it is a sort of miniature epic. As the War of Troy, the tale or legend of the Argo's voyage

represented the temper from which the Hellenic tribes grew into a nation. The Fourth Pythian is the monumental basis of the story. Pindar was entitled to assume that his countrymen could understand allusions and supply a key. That justifies abruptness. Take it thus and the multiplicity of flashes of the narrative are wonderful. Characters are dropped upon the stage: a boy heir *Jison* a model of self command calm tenacity a cold lover astute schemers Pelias Laertes—and at once they live! Pindar in his eagle's flight leaves all kinds of difficulties behind him and they have explained themselves away. Even the touch of feeling generally wanting in the Odes is added here by the final pleading equally sagacious by way of counsel to the King of Cyrene, and affectionate to an exiled friend.

Nevertheless I must confess to perplexity still at the unqualified modern literary adoration of the Theban Lagle.

Justice weighs that they received against the sums
they have spent

And, toil by day and by night they cannot pay what
was lent !

Galley slaves on a chain though each lives and labours
alone,

Ugly years without joy since each had but thought of
his own

Regard now the doom of the rich who are good tis
not theirs

To spend the bloom of their vigour on dull and common
pice cares

Waste their vigour at the oar harass the soil with the
plough

Earn a livelihood barely and by the sweat of the
brow

No like evils escaped from the land of shadows they
come

Astonished awhile, perplexed to that which still is their
home

To take up the life they had left just one stage further
on

And sequel resume of work that but for death they
had done —

Shamed at nothing on Earth or in Hades unless to
dare

A petition for alms and shrinking from nought but
a lie !

Thus living a life the well beloved of Heaven must
live—

ear called to shed—for Heaven has no sin to forgive—
d the trials—thrice of living thrice of dying—when
each

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Stage proves itself powerless to stain ; has nought more
to teach—

Quitting the portals of Darkness, the Elect feel their
fate

Pacing in light and in wonder the marble of the street
Paved by Zeus o'er sea, earth, and air for the Souls of
the Blest

To reach Saturn's Court, hold high festivals there, and
there rest.

In eddies of whisp'ring music round the Happy Isles
breathe

Ocean's daughters welcome, while chaplets and armlets
they wreath

To adorn the King's guests ; for waters and woods are
afame

With blossoms of ev'ry texture, hue, form, fragrance,
and name,

Stooping their heads to the waves, swinging aloft in
the breeze

Playing mid the foliage of multitudinous trees ;—

And all of pure gold ; for nothing may less precious
be seen

About halls where abides the Ancient of Days with his
Queen.

Here, Destiny's work for them fully accomplished,
and well.

The Chiefs of the nations in peace and in harmony dwell:
Cadmus, Thebes-maker, and Princes—Dragon's teeth—
that she bred ;

Peleus, hero and king, august, friend of Gods, Goddess-
wed.

Joying in his son, whom a Mother's, a Wife's, tears and
sighs

Had melted the heart of Zeus to lift into Paradise
—And many besides, of whom legend and minstrelsy
tell

Feast now as brethren and friends in Saturn's fair
citadel,—

Like, unlike, all having felt wrong and perhaps, done
again,

But all having borne themselves manly and kings been
of Men!

For none enter without leave of the Keeper of the
Keys

Rhadamanthus interpreter sworn of Saturn's decrees,
From his bench in the Isles assaying the quick and the
dead

Thus the sainted Spirits themselves as Jove's pathway
they tread

Know not their bliss until the flowers and Heavenly
strains

Proclaim them freed for ever from life's penalties and
pains!

Yet while Soul, though predestined it be, is wrapped
fast and deep

In elements of gross clay and still has its grave-clothes
to keep

Heaven in earnest of its grace has bestowed on some eyes
Skill to decipher the text of holiest mysteries

Here and there the fire falls upon a bard—even on Me—
To see Life casting a shadow of Immortality!

My quiver has its arrows for minds that will under-
stand

And a touch by them shows us from a peak the Promised
Land.

Words that to boasters of learning are a mere idle tale,

For sitters at wise men's feet are withdrawal of a veil.
 Critics are crows that dare with blustering chatter molest
 An eagle in his flight doing mighty Zeus's behest.

Strung the bow; but the mark? Inspiration waits
 to be told

At what to aim the shafts of brainwork as supple as
 bold.

Agrigentum? that is the City; and him that I deem
 Agrigentum's noblest I choose, best of all for my theme.
 Trust a bard's insight, when by the Nine Muses he swears
 That no Greek town has known in the space of a hundred
 years

Theron's match in yearnings to rush to the help of a friend,
 In hands op'n to spread, as others to grasp, wealth with-
 out end!

Well that extravagant praise brings an imposture to
 shame;

But babble and spite will throw their mud on a true
 man's fame.

Come; I count my Theron's good works; take up,
 doubters, your stand

On the shore: set against each a single grain of sea
 sand

I wager, you tire of the game long, good people, before
 The close of my tale of bounties forces me to give o'er!

THE SHIP ARGO

IV Pythia

ANCESTILAS, Cyrene's King,
Victor on Pytho's Course I sing
He is my theme, noble in deeds and blood !
And where could Hellas with more right
Anticipate thoughts acts both wise and good
Than in source from Argo's crew ? I delight
To tell our Age of the stock whence Battia's came,
And know that, if eall were their ways would be the
same

Tortuous Argo's voyage back
Homewards but thought can mark the track
I hear a mighty City's loud acclaim
Welcoming home a victor King
In Cyrene's mingled with Argo's, name
And hymns that thy at Delphi sing
For, amid high fortunes Cyrene thou hast seen
Without Argo forget not thou wouldst not have been !

The galley, lengthening its route—
To baffle Colchian pursuit
Of it and Medea reached the Red Sea
Balking the foe its oar-men bore

The ship by land, as cunningly

Medea bade, to Afric's shore.—

As they prepared, reaching the Tritonian Lake
To relaunch. One, in human guise, of stately make,

Offered, as to the newly come.

Hospitalities of his home.

With breath in their nostrils of their own land,

They could not stay: but he still bent

They should not part without gift from his hand,

As Euphemus, the Pilot, leant

From the prow, thrust in his palm the nearest beach
clod:

Knowing the gift's worth, being in truth a Sea God.

Zeus, as He saw the largess pass,

Thundered approval; but alas!

The clod, neglected by those to whose care

It had piously been consigned,

Was tumbled in a corner anywhere,

And soaked by brine, hustled by wind,

Till the germ of Libya's Imperial State

Was content to be island Lemnos, and to wait.

Medea, Queen, Sage, Prophetess,

Magician—born in turn to bless,

Curse, Great Heuses—on the Libyan Coast

Saw the clod giv'n, and what was willed,

Being hard by at Thera when 'twas lost,

Felt its purpose must be fulfilled.

Hear things sad and glad, told the Ship's crew by the
Queen

Predicting good fortune to right ill that had been:

"The Giver deemed our Pilot son
 Of the same father, would steer on
 For his home at Ténarus and there throw
 His present in the waves that beat
 Above the entrance to the World Below—
 First link in chain Time must complete
 Not for Him of the Lake Tritonis to suspect
 That Euphemus would with a Lemnos Bride elect

A foreign domicile first there
 Then—or his stock—in Thera where
 A chieftain of the House in long descent
 From him should finally obey
 Apollo's own warnings and clear intent
 And gathering an armed array
 To besit the hero ancestry whence he springs
 Found cities in Libya, and a line of Kings'

Silence Her voice—the music!—ceased
 But tongues were not thereby released
 To talk of common life

Though this strange She
 Lighted but by a partial ray
 That dark immensity Futurity
 Each mused 'In some fresh gleam of day
 Might not his stem be seen in like flowers to break?'
 And hugged a dumb trance between hope and fear to
 wake

Tangled tales Argos, Jason's are,
 And scarce shall I reshape them square
 Step-brother Pelias tricked Æson down
 But Delphi had drawn over all

The lurid sheen of the Ioleic crown.

After its way, a death-black pall ;

“ When comes to sunny Ioleus with one foot bare
A highlander, stranger, or citizen. Beware ! ”

And so it was that when this lust.

In Pelias of Kingship thrust

Gentle Æson from his due, there was born

A son to him, bewailed as dead.

But for safety sent by night, babe forlorn.

To Centaur Chiron to be bred.

Grown to manhood, one midday in the market-place
Of Iolcus 'twas He stood—How doubt ! of Royal race.

Half-shod, shoc lost, the mountaineer—

Marked such by daggers, underwear

Close-fitting, pard-skin against prickly hail—

Recked as little as that a tide

Of gold, his locks, like rays on coat of mail,

Rustled down ; and, as upon his hill-side,

A lone wilderness, he, nerve-proof, silent, gazed there ;

Sensible of nought but that he was a King's Heir !

None guessed whence he ; all stood at gaze
Of their homeless sovereign.

One says :

“ Surely not Mars from Aphrodité's bed ?

Or Apollo from Delos come ?

Otus, Ephialtes, great Chiefs, are dead ;

And too Tityus met his doom

From Artemis, whose unerring quiver taught force

Not to trespass on loves outside its measured course.”

Chatter rambles round guilt leaps strait
 To conclusions confesses Fate
 His swift mules hurried Pelias along
 To the market place where apart
 Stood One, single sandalled beyond the throng
 Death hissed at the usurper's heart
 But the King asked from what last Giant womb of
 Earth—
 Though he quaked to hear—the tall Youth derived his
 birth

Frank and courteous the reply
 Though unknown the Questioner

' I

Jason ' Chiron's name for me from his cave
 Come—sent thither a new born Thing
 It was my parents' stratagem to save
 A life that troubled the new King
 Chiron's daughters reared the child to be good and
 pure
 He trained the boy in manly arts and to endure

But when I had attained full age
 He bade me claim my heritage
 Pelias was mute

At Jason's request

Some showed him his home There 'tis to'd
 Were joy tears and a five days' and nights
 feast—

Strong hands had they in times of old '—
 With on the sixth a full hearing of Jason's cause
 Received with far and near lineage's applause

He might have measured strength, and vain
 Had been his uncle's claim to reign.
 But Jason was Chiron's pupil : his right
 Was sacred : yet away armed strife !
 He came : Pelias, believe, to unite.
 Fate frowns when heirs share by the knife.
 Though for all fraud, to which craft tempts, vengeance
 waits stored,
 Let common blood keep peace, and not unsheathe the
 sword !

Alike from Cretheus we descend :
 And Powers of Heaven forfend
 That with spears and javelins we divide
 Goods our ancestors' treasure yields !
 Nay, freely I leave to thee on thy side.
 Sheep, herds of yellow oxen, fields.
 I mind not that thy House has prospered by our ill :
 It may keep thriving on its spoil with my good will !

" But the sovereign Sceptre, the Throne
 Whereon Cretheids ruled, alone.
 A horse-taming People, by grant Divine,
 They are my right. On their release
 All contention ends between mine and thine ;
 If not, never will there be peace ! "
 Pelias preparing for every event
 Made answer apt for what might sound, not be, assent.

" It is no joy for me to reign ;
 Take Throne and Sceptre. I resign.
 But I owe a duty, as a King, first,
 And Thou too one before a Crown.

The bloom of youth begins in Thee to burst
In me life's flame is dying down
Now see how thy main object I would reconcile
With a wondrous dream that visited me erewhile

Phrixus bade me convoy the Fleece
The rams that saved him back to Crece
Hoping for his own self discharged from guard
Of this wonder distressful post
And relieved of his long watch and ward
Among barbarians poor Ghost
Freedom to join the disembodied Shades Below,
Or if not Hades to range Hellas to and fro

Counsel I asked at Delphi Clear
Preemptory the mandate there
To send a ship for Fleece and Soul

Prove Thou

Kingship by success and I call
Jus Tutelar of our race to attest my vow
To give up Throne and Royal Hall'—
Well assured he that the famed Skin was fenced by charms
Unconquerable by array of human arms!

Judging by self he dropped from view
The task's terrors But Jason knew
And they inflamed his passion As the head
Of a chief State potent his claim
To call and as one race Achæans lead
So forth went Heralds in his name
Inviting fifty Heroes, Champions of all Greece
To ship on Argo and win back the Golden Fleece!

And Heaven in thunder its answer spoke :

Whereat hearts that stood beat again.

Palms at the Seer's bidding leaped upon their oars.

And, insatiably twirling, left behind the shores.

South breezes favoured : by their grace

They neared the Axeme. There a race

Of tumultuous, settling waters blocks

Transit of galleys through the strait.

The while a pair of wild eddying rocks

Till then had lain in constant wait.

Jason knew, and moored, he had the wise thought to
found

A shrine to Poseidon, and sanctified the ground.

Heroes' prayers move the Sea King.

He accepted their offering.

A bull—from a red herd, its lord unknown,

That grazed, lawlessly free, the shore—

For sacrifice on a hewn altar stone ;

Then, maddening with thirst for men's gore

The half-sentient rock monsters—blind with that lust—

Drove them into grinding each other into dust !

Lo ! the Phasis ! can Colchis hold

Against Argo the Fleece of Gold !

But, brave Chief and comrades, there lie between

Worse odds than on a battlefield.

Subtle counsellors, wizards, who have been

Taught spells that baffle spear and shield.

Fifty Greek champions may rout a black Colchic host ;

Little cares its King ; not so will his spoil be lost !

Child of the Sun's Character

Estes had lived long in fear

That the heir of the Eolids from Greece

Would lay claim as by right of blood

Of Phryxus to regain the Golden Fleece

He had been shown by Div's wise God

How when force was unequal, judgment wiles and charms

Might be trusted to cure defects in right and arms

He was safe else were there a doubt,

His Medea would stamp it out

Prime enchantress she in all Asian land

Relied on beyond his own brain

By her father in all he took in hand

His hope when all besides was vain

Men guardian he of the Fleece Jason's friendly host

Would yield as Pelus to a champion of the trust

Blessing be on the Queen of Love!

Floating from her Paphian Grove

She brought now first on Earth tied on its wheel

Among her sharpest darts of fire,

The speckled wyneck that slak'n will unseal

The frantic torrent of Desire

Medea Jason at the Palace met as foes

A bird whirled and between them passion bloomed,
A rose!

Inspired by Aphrodite he

Effused as with a sponge all she

Had felt of pride in country reverence

For parents instinct to disguise

Hail ! victory beyond belief
Is to his line returned the Chief
How hand clasped hand and crowns of grass were
twined
To him more precious than of gold
And words hurst from the heart tender and kind !
For, though the tale was but half told
A spirit like his was not one to be gainsaid
Nor his Argos an enterprise that could be staved

Aetes played his part too proud
To show surprise as Jason ploughed
Caily welcomed him to the Fleece when fetched
From a snake a ship's breadth and length
Where in the reptile's jaws it lay outstretched
Light work that to the Ploughman's strength !
Brave taunt this although not so bold as meant to
sound
Already he felt he stood on no solid ground

He clung even the Dragon slun
To the boast of his realm and reign
In the strife shunning no foul play or game
That to spilling a brother's blood
Medea joyed to frustrate by the same
Weighing not means if bad or good
Slave she of passions as hot as the brain was chill
That hured itself to school and serve an iron will

In Arceasias we acclaim
Argo re lives— all—in his fame !
But City had Apollo too who thrice
Warned his hear from a lesser thing

Bade covet, and it only, a pearl beyond price ;
 As Fate's hand, be Cyrene's King.
 When did other elod defy storms to overwhelm,
 And, tossed on its native beach, grow City and
 Realm !

So, what seemlier for the Shrine
 That willed the crowning of his line.
 Than to grant the eighth Prince prime place and grace
 In the bloom of his rosy Spring,
 Victor in the great Amphietrion Race.

With Me—so the Muse would—to sing
 How the Ship, his forefather's, with Love's aid to Greece,
 Redeemed the homeless Ghost of Phrixus, and the
 Fleece !

Fortunate is his lot whom Fate
 Has decreed ruler of his State,
 When wisdom is his, and the City's Chief
 Is skilled to be its Healer too ;
 Has a touch that is balm for all forms of grief.
 Arcesilas, that gift use Thon
 The God of Healing's self is standing by thy side ;
 May He breathe calm on troubled waters—be thy Guide !

The task is hard. Weakness breeds wrong ;
 None set it right who are not strong.
 But blest Cyrene of the Golden Throne,
 That seated on it is a Lord
 Whom the Sister Graces have made their own.
 Teaching kind acts, the winning word,
 To be as far as one man's vision may extend,
 Law's champion, an honest foe, a generous friend.

O King and dearer still Friend,
 Muses is their messenger and
 Bards for messages to the wise consigned
 Mean acts well done and what so well
 Prepared a conduit pipe as a Bard's mind.
 Hear Me then while I frankly tell
 How Thou mightst fortify a rule that I approve
 And restore his country to an Exile I love

Rough experiences of youth
 Have taught Demophilus plain truth
 Though late he strips tinsel rhetoric bare
 That dressing spite in fancy phrase
 Caught him—staring up—in an open snare
 Escaped and from an all fools maze,
 He wonders he could ever have been led astray
 By chimeras from duties living on his way

No Cyrene Citizen born
 Bridg'ndowed as he lacks his turn
 To influence the fortunes of his State
 He admits that it came and went
 For Opportunity will never wait
 Leaves no opening to repent
 Misery to know that in his own blindfold quest
 Of a chance the worst, he has thrown away the
 best

Thus seen the idleness at last
 Of wrestling with schemes vague and vast
 Feebler Atlas he has long craved to change
 Ideal dreams for work of hand,

Within his far, loved Cyrenæan range.

On—modest bounds—his father's land,
Stretched beside Apollo's Fountain, to feast and sing,
His lyre's notes blending with the murmurs of the
Spring.

Pity, and recall. Saturn's Son

Showed mercy when the War was done.

Granting the rebel Titans their release.

Demophilus is no such foe.

Now that the youthful turbulences cease.

Bid thy wrath's gusts no longer blow.

He'll take up time from ere wild germs began to breed :

Asking of life but what staid Townsmen claim to lead.

Not to thy heart alone appeal

I for a Minstrel, to unseal

A King's fount of mercy, to let it flow

Fully and freely where it will ;

But for Cyrene too—Many waste now

In thinking, if not working, ill

Against Thee on foreign soil, whose valour and word

Might avail thy Realm in Arms, or at Council-Board.

And riddles Thou canst read : Among

Encircling boughs, a bending throng.

An oak may reign for Ages, bearing fruit.

Shorn of its branches, it will live

Just for so long as it shall chance to suit

Men's caprice for it to survive.

The site wanted—itsself for fuel—to be made

Slave, a roof's pillar—farewell, Monarch of the glade !

It takes trunk branches earth—all Three
In unison to make a Tree
The cruel loss the suicidal fit
Fellow Citizens might and man—
Like wolves tearing each other in a pit—
Sword crossing sword brain crossing brain
Until Egypt Persia descend a host and sweep
The entire Pentapolis on a cinder heap

At least how could I not regret
To have unpaid a Poet's debt
To a Poet for having when of life
My guest struck on a theme of song
Divine Heroes' deeds, mysteries of Fate
That has borne Me on wings along *
Thy name Arcesilas shall live if that with Mine
Then remember who inspired Me the wreath to twine!

ÆSCHYLUS

ÆSCHYLUS

THE property in *Æschylus* which particularly impresses me is his power of concentration on a single character even on one point. All dramatists have for each play a character about whom the rest persons and incidents gather or are supposed to gather. An author of a book desires to spread the interest. Indeed characters themselves whether in play or volume have an instinct for refusing to be despotically absorbed. *Æschylus* in his

Prometheus insisted upon it and succeeds. From the first verse of the Play to the last minds emotions are as spectacularly they could not help being riveted on the agonized figure on the cliff's side. Not that this is all even the chief marvel of the piece. Ages worlds of manifold passion conflict past future present—unfathomable in themselves—change and interchange, whirl round the Deity undecified suffering pain as men suffer pain only that none human could survive this. He has insight into decrees of Fate which mighty *Zeus* covets to learn though they might show Him consigned to be mocked by His captive Titans in Tartarus.

We might imagine that *Æschylus* had intended to diversify the interest by representing the Giver of Fire to Earth as a martyr for Humanity, a Redeemer of Man from the permanent status of mere head of the beasts

of the field that Zeus and himself found him. Such mediation is pictured only to fascinate us the more with Prometheus. The work he does, his conflicts with Olympus serve simply to explain the stupendous Being a Thinker has elaborated, created out of his own fancy, and his discontent with the State Theology of Hellas.

The "Agamemnon" exhibits the same absorption of the Poet in one of his characters. His subject was a grand one, the return of the Conqueror. It was wrenched out of his hands by the adultery of Clytemnestra, and her revenge for the slaughter of Iphigenia. That, too, a sufficient theme for tragedy. But the Greek General in Chief brings in his train the Prophetess Cassandra. Thenceforward the Play is hers. Little cares writer, any more than reader or spectator, for the forced connexion of Captive and Conqueror, or for any, very unlikely, affection of hers for the slayer of her family. Two women occupy the stage; but for Æschylus really there is only one. When the Prophetess is gone, the curtain might as well drop!

If there could be anything beyond the utterness with which a vision seized on Æschylus when he ranged about for a ruling Idea, it must have been at the birth in his brain of the Hymn of the Eumenides. The play is properly named after them. They make it; and the Hymn is they. How triumphantly the Three defend themselves—how grisly, hideous they remain. But by it, through it, the grip they keep on heart and brain! Is there anything in the entire range of dramatic literature its equal? I say "dramatic"; but the "Prometheus" is an Ode, and the "Agamemnon" a string of Odes.

Yet the pen which fetched the Furies from the Gates of Hell could describe a battle, that of Salamis, as vividly

as if a Napier were reporting from despatches written on the field. We feel as we read that not an incident is related for which the Marathon soldier could not vouch the honour of his sword. Not the less but the more it is inspired poetry.

PERSIAN NARRATIVE OF BATTLE OF SALAMIS

Persai

THE Night was sped ;
And Dawn arrayed in grey, and blue, and red,
Harnessed her milk-white fillies—

Then, while we
Looked, though against all likelihood, to see
The Hellenes' disappointment, as they tried
Our line—three hundred triremes, side by side.
Without a gap—and next scanned the array
For flags of truce, and Heralds on their way
To pray for mercy—suddenly a shout
Rang, loud, and musical as Pæan, out ;
And echo, returned from the rocky shore
Of Salamis, swelled the chorus to a roar.

If startled we, how not ? When men have fooled
Themselves like this, whose blood would not be cooled ?

Greeks quaking ? Preparations made to fly ?
Nay, hailing Death, with Odds of victory !

But no pause left for us to scold our past ;—
Scarcely had the shout died down, when blared a blast,
Trumpets sounding onset, setting, as 'twere
On flame, Strait, and circumambient air.
Forthwith, at a word. Greek oars rose and fell

With regular stroke on the murmurous swell,
 And the whole was seen of the puny fleet
 Moving in battle line our own to meet !

For the attack their right wing led the rest—
 Strange with what meetings its ranks were dressed—
 Each following kept its due interval—
 A moment's hush and then as if a call
 On Heaven at once and Greeks we heard a cry
 Vast multitudinous appeal on high

O Sons of Hellas will ye brook to see
 Your native soil no longer yours and free
 The Shrines of your ancestral Gods the Graves
 Of your Sires defiled your wives daughters slaves ?
 Your choice to stand or kneel !—Never again !
 Show whether ye be driven cattle or Men !

Think not that when they raised their battle cry,
 We failed to answer it to do or die,
 But the Fight was on—crashing boats on boats
 Half our defiance expired in our throats !

Theirs to begin—one steering straight to break
 A Sidon galley with his brazen beak
 Best in its tall curved poop another sent
 An Egyptian to the bottom with rent
 Yawning right in the gilded prow—and yet
 Fortune was fairly even while the fleets met
 In the open. By degrees the attack
 Pressed our midles of galleys back and back
 Until far from neighbours assisting each
 Had to labour not with sharp prow to breach
 Swaying comrade or lurching by mere bulk
 Sweep off a bench of ours and leave a hulk

They knew their work—prison the settling mass
 And chase wild stragglers who might strive to pass

Fast the pinched surface of the deep was spread
 With straggling keels upturned. and dyed blood red ;
 At eve the victor crews off Ajax-isle
 Slew in the king's sight our noblest, now cheap and
 vile.

Such ships as heaks, Greck. Persian, failed to
 smite.

Flung hither. thither. in disordered flight.
 Yet after risks many, much wandering.
 Held out. to reach a port. and serve The King.
 But alas ! for the slain. though less for those
 Whom Death in battle-shock saved from our foes,
 Than for theirs who survived to swim the Strait.
 And pray quarter from unquenchable hate.
 Wild orgy there of massacre and gore !
 As with a shoal of tunnies on the shore,
 Or fish bursting the net. the victors hewed
 And hacked their prey with splinters of drift-wood.
 Wind and Ocean hushed. borrowing from Death
 The wailing and moaning to be their voice and
 breath !

Pity us too ! who watched the agony.
 Till Night saw ; drew within her sanctuary
 A shattered salvage !—

Great Queen. I have done !

But if ten days were counted, one by one,
 'Ere the horrors I viewed were all rehearsed.
 The tale would crave more.—broke not this heart
 first !

Be sure no single day since the Sun's birth
 Has seen like carnage revelling on Earth !

CASSANDRA AT THE GATE

Igam. vs. 1206-1330

THE FIRE ! The Fire ! It lights on me again !
 Mercy ! Forgive ! Off ! Off ! It scorches breast and
 brain !
 Must I ?

I must ! Old men ye deem I rave ?
 But I see see ! Believe me once !
 Burst in and save !—
 Perjured lioness—wolf mated—two in one !
 The dagger !

Are ye blind ?—The slaying is begun
 Will one heart's blood suffice ? She thirsts for
 gore
 She crowns the cup—with mine !—

'Tis done—I see no more
 At last I am free In there in the dust
 Priestess's wand and necklaces for who will and must
 Happier the real crazed vagrant's lot
 That scoffers called mine than truth telling, hearkened
 not

Vengeful God I thank thee hane of my life
 That thou hast trapped me here under the butcher's
 knife—

Ah ! boasted I was free ?

No, a thrall still—

A bond-slave still to work Apollo's spiteful will ;

To warn, and be mocked.

Look ! the slaughter-bath ;

With a Fiend unlocking a ten years' hoard of wrath !

" May murder riot—no blood-fine be paid ?

Is a King to die, and his ghost never be laid ?

Nay ; do I not in this Mycenæ hear

A stripling, banned, an exile, by the great Gods
swear

That for each blood-drop of a father slain

Adulteress and Adulterer shall shed twain ?

Prophecy I vain things ? I but desery

The future in the past, and you have thought I lie.

Troy sank in flames : and was it not the meed

For a people glorying in a robber's deed ?

And if its victors perish, do not they

As just a vengeance for impious fury pay ?

And what am I, that I murmur at Fate !

An atom, crushed under the wheels of a wife's
hate !

Ye Furies, warders of the gates of Hell.

Grant me but one last pray'r : and then, grey Life,
farewell !

I would be decently, when I am dead.—

Not I fight Destiny ; I was royally bred.

" Why enter if I see 'tis death ? " you say.

What gain in lengthening life by hours, when my day

Is come ? And ill would it befit my race

To skulk away from death, not meet it face to face.

For happy minutes have each its sweet taste :

Years to Priam's daughter are one desolate waste.—

' But horror !

These foul odours that assault
My nostrils, as from fresh opened ancestral vault
To receive new corpses !

Scent from the feast
Preparing to regale the victor lord and guest
Beside his household altars ' ?

Nay a flood
As when red Murder stalks abroad of kindred blood !
Yet—I am strong again—I go within
For I have a double part to play—

Hark ! begin
Two death agonies and sole Mourner I
Though also tis with Agamemnon mine to die —
Enough of life for me death cannot spare
Me like a bird suspecting in each bush a snare
Only when a Woman and Man atone
Hereafter for what in this house shall have been
done

Stranger friends for, t not that I died brave —
Thus the last favour that of you I dying crave
' So much for Earth and Life

And now for Death !
Hear Sun the dirge I chant with my expiring
breath

While my eyes drink their last of thy blest light !
Watch for Thou watchest all that these butchers
requite

The unbefriended Thrall their easy prey,
For the doom she shares in blood orgies of to day !—

Though what am I ? Dust fallen when Troy fell
Scarcely reckoned in spoil the Conqueror brought to
swell

His triumph !

But He !

Black the sky ; and grim
Fortune's changed countenance ; how now she scowls
at Him !

At the flash of a falchion flit away
A Crown, a Warrior's wreath, Imperial sway !
All shadows, like his Troy !

I to complain
That a Murderess snaps for me a captive's chain !—
“ Ha ! See not you there your King bleeding lie ?—
I come ! I come !

I cannot Save ; but I can Die ! ”

CHAIN SONG OF THE FURIES

' SISTERS join hands for the dance We who are One
and are Three
For our measure Three are enough no tender lyre
need We
The Muse cares not for charm who inspires our chorus
and hymn
And mortals gladly would shun what to them is ugly
and grim
But they shall see and shall hear the rule by which We
divide
Their lots for although black our home, We have
nothing to hide
Let them shrink from Us and abhor but respect Us
they must
For our pride and our pleasure are to be upright and
just
We are of clean heart and hands with no sin to
conceal
They may pass and in peace it is not with such that
We deal
But death and its agony—appeals of souls born,
torn
From sun and life by their kinsfolk—half ghosts help
less forlorn—

We minister to them ; straight we rise to Earth at their
cry :

Register foul play. ev'ry charge that they bring as they
die.

Though the murderer breast mountain torrent or the
sea-flood.

We follow, like skuth-hounds, the eternal scent of the
blood :

Never halt till We have dragged him face to face with
his guilt.

And plunged his soul, stripped and naked, in the gore
he has spilt.

“ Night ! Night ! our mother, who conceivedst Us,
Thou in Thy womb.

On Earth, and after in Hell, to execute righteous doom.
Hear how the Son of Latona now has dared to out-
stretch

His insolent arms ; snatch from our grasp this
cowering wretch.

Banished by Us from his home, hunted by Us from his
kind—

This suppliant for death, which, as pleases Us, he shall
find—

This pretender to a balance of crimes, forsooth, to set
one,

Wife's murder of husband, against a mother's by her
son—

This boaster of piety, matricide, venting his ire
On robbers of his heritage, not slayers of his sire—

This chastiser of treason, as if our arm were grown
short

Against traitress and traitor, and had wanted his support !

Dance, Sisters, dance our unlovely feet
Narrow the mystic circle we beat
Th' Accurst cannot resist as We sing,—
See! he is stepping within the ring!
Passionless and chill our fateful strain
Fans furnace fire in the murderer's brain
High though his impious head he hold
It shames base metal he prized as gold
Ravels the toils in which he is caught,
Dazes amazes drives astray and distraught
Is palsy to his soul a pest laden wind from the past
To one torturing blighting idea ties his whole being
fast
Prisons him in a dungeon of himself rattling an endless
chain
Withered, a live ghost into nothingness except for
the pain!
Does the stripling God in insulting Us know he
desies
Not Us the Three weird sisters that he affects to
despise?
He fights a force not Heaven nor Man may hope to
hate—
Which turns not aside nor falters—irresistible Fate!
Fate spun Us into existence like her doggedly We
Born vassals study her will and accomplish her decree
Best of all do We loyally her behests when as here
We set our wits in a tangle of cross murders to clear
Subtle confusions of motive and a babel of tongues
Feigning all of them commissions to correct public
wrongs
We keep in obstinate nostrils distinct each several
scent

Till, troubling Ourselves with no sophisms, We cast,
mauled and rent,

A carcase of soul to the Underworld, not even there
Freer after all than in life while breathing upper
air!

This the lot we were born to, as born were the Gods
to theirs;

Fate gave Us no bright raiment: We to poor things
were made heirs:

Strange heritage ours, the reek of some rank butcherly
strife.

When nearest who should be dearest are spoiled of home
and life;

Blood, freshly dripping. We love; by it the Slayer
to track:

Blot him out of existence, though with a host at his
back.

Look, with long strides he comes in virtue of strength
and of birth.

And pride—his!—of being the champion of Right upon
Earth:

We crouch, like leopard on bough, leap from above;
and there low.

Fallen and crushed, a mangled mass, heavy-footed our
blow,

Lies he, sensible only that o'er him broods something
worse

Than horrors of the present—an intolerable Curse.

“One business ours, to punish; the only wages We
ask,

To be free to warn off even Gods, while We do our
task!

With our work our ways have We no appeals lie from
our Court

Barren any prayers to outside Powers for support
Alone We work at our toil, no fellowship seek in care,
So when We sit and feast We invite not others to
share

We do as We are done by ask your Olympian Zeus
When He has bid to His board guests gone bedraggled
like Us!

Men trust in human glory! how immutable it seems,
As in the noonday radiance the golden Palace gleams!

We steal from where We dwell
Black robed in our drear cell
Round the splendour the awe
Of the grand show We draw
Our magic ring a blight
Blots out the gay sunlight
And as our jealous feet
Their dull sad cadence beat
From within the tracing of the ominous round
Returns the golden emanation underground
And in a mist which makes a funereal dome
A pall to canopy the desolated home,
Groaning incoherent takes a maniac
Unknowing himself contriver of the rack
Staggers beneath the shadow of his own sin
Wondering what he is and what he has been.

Steadfast our purpose fulfilling itself in many
modes,

But the goal always is one, however diverse the roads
Our memories store ill deeds as musers hoard up their
gold

And mortals love Us not, for We are pitiless and cold.
In garbage We grope, and drag rottenness into the
light ;

Kindness and joyance for Gods ; We are children of night
and blight.

If We light a torch. 'tis to cheat our prey stumbling in
front ;

We need no such flickering to guide our feet in the
hunt.

Tremble, Mortals, hearing the ordinance that the Fates
framed,

Heaven. receiving, could not but sign; and We have
proclaimed.—

'That. though blood kinsmen have shed seem awhile
to be dumb,

By communion to Us it shall rise, and plead from the
tomb.'

In the Sunless Land is our post ; there our vigils We
keep,

Till Time is ripe for a Ghost to haunt the Murderer's
sleep.

Thankless our work ; and We know it. Mortals, loathe,
as ye will !

We, with our whip of serpents, shall glory in scourging
Ill ! "

SOPHOCLES

SOPHOCLES

No two writers each great of plays are more unlike in the action of them than Isechylus and Sophocles. Sophocles like Isechylus was a poet of high genius. In drama he was first of all a dramatist. He accepted took or made a story framed it playwise then put its characters with the vitality he had inspired on the stage. In relation to them their activity there he is nothing but playwright. It may be objected that this is mere word trickery. It is the same mind in a different capacity. the author shuffles the pieces as he pleases. With a thorough artist this is not true. As a playwright he ought not therefore he cannot. The Chorus is outside the rule. He may lead that in praise of his own dear Colonos even exalt the dominion of Aphrodite and her child Eros. Elsewhere he is on honour not to interfere with the laws of the being he had bestowed.

The result is a statuesque certainty of effect. One scene in the *Edipus Tyrannus* is supreme. The downfallen blind prince describes to Theban townsmen the fatal encounter with his father Laius at the Three Ways with none left for witness but a gurgling brook. Simple the means overpowering the impression! Every line though the reader the spectator knows the whole tragedy compels a pause before he allows himself to

recognize his knowledge. The Dramatist never loses control of his own emotions. A stillness, serenely almost, infuses itself into catastrophes the most volcanic. Eternal calm broods over the victim of Fate. Modern students hang, as would the thousands of rapt Athenians, not on the lines of the Poet, but on the sightless outlaw, during the awful moments when he defends his self-effacement from all human society!

Throughout the dramatic remains, and in all surviving allusions to the much of which we deplore the loss, Sophocles shows the same abnegation of self. Characters in his plays live their own lives in essentials. We have only to recollect the Antigone of the "Oedipus in Colonus" to be sure how she would treat the edict of Creon. The descent into the tomb and end there were the inevitable dramatic triumph of a heroine over a tyrant. It is the same with the "Ajax." For the dramatist the Ajax was Homer's champion of Hellas, no casual victim of a fit of madness, in cheap's shambles. Fallen, the mighty fighter, as of necessity in a wrestle of muscles with brains, has to die, but dies grandly.

The moderation, the evenness, the self-restraint, of the Poet as Dramatist, after some twenty-five centuries, make themselves still felt. Wielded, hurled, by the fancy of Æschylus, the passion, the wrath, the combative philosophy of "Prometheus," the vindictiveness, as scorching as cold-blooded, of the Furies, cleave their way irresistibly, are audible whatever the tongue. Scholarship helplessly suspects, even hopes, that a proper appreciation of Sophocles, and of his delicate dramatic conscience, has suffered through the impossibility of representing the mellowed harmony of Attic diction through the medium of downright English.

ŒDIPUS VINDICATES HIS BLINDNESS

AND what see I sightless?

Three roads meet,—

Brims narrow the space for jostling feet

Of men and horses

Stone deaf I should hear

That old man's orders and that young man's
jeer—

Now swords clashing now stillness as of death—

Save a hidden brook murmuring beneath

Soil gore red—a father's—by a son shed!

So I left Lord Charioteer stark dead

Drift I on Hell's trail Invisible then,

Though Cross Roads met to you the blood of men

Ye had drunk—why not have warned?—for ye knew

What having done I was cursed by Fate to do!

Nuptials begetting nuptials! Rabble rout

Sires brothers children mothers wives in and out!

Mass all adulteries since Earth began

Match this kennel of foulness if you can!

But enough! e'en to tell of it must shame,

As to do shamed nature!—

In Heaven's name

Hasten, and put me anywhere away

Stab me if you will or throw a sea-straw

From a cliff; so that never I again
Be seen of mortal eyes!

For pity, deign

To touch a poor wretch!

You will catch no ache

Through my disease; 'tis one none but myself can
take!

OEDIPUS AT COLONOS

Col. vv. 668-719

STRANGER old and bent and blind,
 Thy guide—or Heaven or Chance—was kind
 In leading thee with gracious hand
 To the crown of all our happy land
 Listen how in this gleaming dale
 Sings Thy welcome the nightingale—

Now clear now soft the warbling from the shady
 The pale green twilight of the woodland glade
 The full notes rise and fall
 Tenderest madrigal

From the tangle of dark ivy
 And the many fruited greenery

Which neither suns of July can parch
 Nor dust storms scatter and toss in March

A wild garden this of ours
 Of flowers upon flowers
 Crocuses each a gold ray

And ave dew fed day by day

The Narcissus in fair clusters blooming by its side,
 Unforgetting how long since it had been its pride
 In Sicilian Etna's meadow to entwine
 Wreaths for Demeter and beauteous Proserpine

Hark ! how threading rocks. leaping hills.

Carol multitudinous rills.

Sleepless through the listening night.

Chattering. flashing in sunlight. .

With broods of quickening showers

Ministering to spring flowers :

Till. one on another, as in frolic and play.

Vaulting and bounding. each pursuing its own way.

All join Cephisus. where plunging from its high crest

It heaps the laughing harvests on the plain's wide
breast.

Haunt of Gods. this spot whither. stranger. Thou
art come :

And we with gladness hail their visits to our home.

Often 'tis Bacchus. by torchlight.

Through forest. over pathless height.

To drum-beat leading his glad band.

Nymphs. his adorers. through our land.

Nor are the Muses absent, dancing, and with song,

Or Aphrodité driving her chariot along.

ANTICONE FRONTING HER TOMB

Antig. vv. 891-907

O CAVERN grim my dwelling place below
 Jailor of this poor flesh & al of its woe

Thou canst not lock me long in thy dour vault
 The only bridal chamber I shall know

Death! Thou art no stranger to the kings from whom
 I count descent of a royal line I come

Hast thou not garnered all their noblest best?
 Unkind thou art called—not to me bound for home!

Few have my days on earth been and all sore
 Stained my young memories with care—the more

Illack for a mother's griefs and Sirs for thine—
 Both tenfold dearer for each pang you bore

And dearer you for yours my brethren twain
 Clasped in whose arms I will forget the pain

Of life, and you your hate drowned in my love—
 Two rancours healed doubling a sister's gain

For one I die for both in that lone cell
 I live in love—Brothers—you know it well—

For you the Womb that bare Sirs that begot—
 Love without which Heav'n as self for me were Hell!

AJAX TO HIS SWORD

AJAX, xv. 615-65

STAND there, good Sword ; be firm, and do thy work.
 Had I leisure, hadst thou, to play with words—
 The wit, the heart—well might we reason out
 Right for that we have on hand :—first, gift Thou
 Hector's—hateful to Me all foreign blood.
 His most, and, among foes of Greece, he most ; —
 Next, the mould wherewith I have girt thee round,
 Trojan earth which loathes Greek feet treading it,
 And thirsts e'en now to drink up my heart's blood ; —
 Lastly, for that thou art a trusty blade,
 Which chooses for its Lord, whoe'er he be,
 Death in workmanlike way, if die he will

This settled, well, in life : —after ? what then ?
 Zeus—for I trace from Thee—grant this I ask—
 Little, precious—that Teucer first of all
 May learn, and draw Me off the recking sword,
 Lest I be spied by some one of my foes,
 And cast a prey for dogs and birds to tear.
 Just that, O Zeus, I kneeling crave of Thee !
 To Thee, winged Hermes, also here I cry :
 Guide of the Dead from Earth to Hades, come,
 Lead with friendly hands to the realms below ;
 Thou shalt not wait, I know how, by one leap

On this brave sword to wrench the life away
Without even a spasm from my gaping side !

And I summon the dread Sisters three —
Ye of stern virginity keen to mark
Wrongs of poor mortals hasten with long stride
Be Judges, Advocates Avengers be !
Let Me face the Atreidee hear Me tell
How they have brought my life to utter nought
Condemn and snatch the cutliffs where their doom,
As absolute as ugly as mine
Is wrought on them by hands dear as their own
Their ruin's depth condignly matching mine

Yea and why righteous furies slack your course ?
Spare not ! make the entire Greek host to taste
Ruth for their guilty Princes—all have sinned !

Hate ? Good such hate ! Alas ! that I am dear,
And bring pain infinite to those I love !
Bright Sun God driving Thou thy car on high
As Thou lookst down on my ancestral isle,
Pluck thy gold studded rein to break the news
Of my perdition and untimely fate
To the Old Man my Father and to Her
Who bore and suckled me Ah ! when She hears
The mourners She will lead the City through !

Enough vain grieving—now to do—and quick !—
Though Death one moment ! ere I come to Thee
Thou and I will have leisure to converse
In plenty There where soon we shall be mates —
But while I still behold Thee Light of Day
I would greet Thee and thy Charioteer
A last and only time—never again !
Thee also holy soil of Salamis

Whereon my home my Father's hearth were raised

And famous Athens, with its kindred race ;
 Nor forget I Troy's rivers, springs and plains ;
 For they have helped nourish Me ;

once for aye

Hearken ; let Ajax bid you all, Fare well !
 Hence wends He, among Shadows, shadows to
 discourse !

EURIPIDES

LURIPIDES

To understand and place Euripides we must not take *Æschylus* much less *Sophocles* for our dramatic measure or standard. He is sensible that he addresses his audience from a stage, yet he binds himself by no theatrical rules has no dramatic conscience or etiquette. He is poet and dramatist combined and moralist besides. Very modern in feeling otherwise he is especially a Modern in his employment of tears. Very rarely in a Play of his is pathos wholly absent as it is from the exuberant melody and fantastic imaginativeness of the wonderful *‘Bacchæ’*. Commonly he runs up and down the whole scale using its powers even weaknesses. In the grand hymn on *Demeter* with more suppleness he reaches the sublimity of *Pindar*. Note how the Mother of the Gods bows Herself to weep not as Goddess as a human mother her ravished daughter. It not the royal pride spiritualizes *Polyxena’s* clam to offer herself, not as devoted by her country & foes to the Ghost of her slain bridegroom. It purifies and sweetens the savagery of *Hecuba* over child *Istvanax*. It connects and reconciles *Iphigenia’s* horror at a father’s immolation of an unwilling victim to *Artemis* with the splendour of her insistence on her right to despatch the Hellenic Armada to the destruction of pirate *Troy*. Continually it is used in

plays on War as a lever to lift blood and havoc to a nobler level.

Whether the occasion for its use arise or not in the course of the action is a matter of indifference to him. In the agony of Troy a queenly mother has the news of Polyxena's voluntary execution of her doom brought by a Herald. For the Poet, as Euripides always—drama or not—was, the distinction was immaterial. He was subject to manifold fits of inspiration which demanded an audience. The Theatre of Athens was open to him; and he availed himself of its hospitality, though often not enthusiastic. For rules he cared not, if it suited his inspiration to break them. He was a teacher; and thousands on the benches were not unwilling to be taught. Critics might tell him he prosed. Crowds, though it were so, listened, and learned. In the opinion of enough others he was a magician, and charmed those who were not of the deaf adder brood. These latter at any rate could not drive him dumb. They jested upon him; accused him of Atheism: spread malignant stories, the viler if at all true, about griefs in his domestic life; grudged the admiration he won from wise thinkers. Bravely he went on writing till death took him, at the age of seventy-four, in a species of voluntary exile at the Court of Macedonian Archelaus. He was always better valued abroad than at home. A noble Epigram attributed to Thucydides attempts to clear Athens as a City of complicity in the baiting of one of its chief glories. It fails to convince.

Renown apparently did not save other illustrious dramatic careers from trouble in Ancient Athens. Æschylus had to stand trial for impiety! An attempt was made to deny Sophocles management of his affairs

on the ground of senile decay ! Happily the fertility of all three marvellous brains in supplying the national stage seemed to thrive the more for the poisonous pin-pricks. As little it may be hoped, added to the scanty concession of prizes. Euripides in particular for his seventy-five or ninety-two Plays was seldom crowned. Not apparently that his seniors were more generously rewarded. Time has been a little more liberal in saving but seven pieces for Æschylus and Sophocles, as against for Euripides seventeen or eighteen according as the

Rhesus is included or omitted. For sheer literary merit and as classics I dare say it may be thought that the general neglect is terrible. But as I remarked earlier the work of Euripides keeps a winning modern flavour. Even in his disregard of literary and dramatic conventions he is able to come closer to fellow human instincts. Put to the bitter necessity of declaring with which of the great Three we could least easily dispense we might find Euripides the hardest to pluck out of our hearts !

DEMETER'S SEARCH FOR PROSERPINE

Helena, vv. 1301-52

I

It was when this world was young,
 And no minstrel yet had sung,
 That the Mother of Gods with hurried feet
 Over mountain, meadow, moor.
 Through glens, and where rivers laugh to meet
 Ocean's deep-resounding roar.
 Rushed in a passion Divine of wrath, love, despair,
 Seeking her lovely daughter lost, carried She knew not
 where !

II

As her team of lions bore
 The lamenting Goddess o'er
 Earth courting her caresses, and her wail
 For the maid stol'n from her hand
 Pierced the clash of castanets on the gale.
 Goddesses, a virgin band,
 Wind-Nymphs, Pallas, with Gorgon's head and panoply,
 And Artemis, joined in the search for sweet Perse-
 phone.

III

Vain — and sad for playmate lost
 In girlhood—as for bud tost
 In May from rose-tree by a northern blast—
 Pallas Huntress Nymphs wind shed
 Back to their Olympian nectar passed
 Mourning as mourns a God
 And as they parted from Demeter pondered when
 She would be found among their company in Heaven
 again !

IV

But in Her the Mother stirred
 Beyond the Goddess —
 She heard
 And bade farewells —
 Then loosened from their yoke
 Her limbs then laid aside
 Her wrath her toreh even her sceptre broke
 Stripping her soul of all pride
 Of ethereal edms that reigns above
 Of Immortal hints to the last agony of love !

V

No longer a Goddess She —
 Nought but Mother would She be —
 A lonely Woman ragged and forlorn,
 Begging scraps that dogs had spurned,
 Beseeching tidings of a Daughter torn
 From her embrace often turned
 Into the drear night with rude going from the door
 Then some clue which broke —leaving Her more
 hopeless than before !

VI

Patient of roughness, sorrow ;
 Humbling Godhead to borrow
 Help from Man, of no more avail than Heav'n :
 She, of Gods most innocent,
 Who, more than all, for human kind had striv'n.
 In heart and brain worn and spent
 With groping for a way out whence there was way none,
 On the ground down fell swooning, comfortless, childless,
 alone.

VII

It was Ida's topmost peak,
 Where Nymphs of the mountain seek
 For strays that the call of warm blood in spring—
 Scent, violet and primrose—
Has set on the high uplands wandering
 For joys no other flock knows.—
 There in a stony, snow-deep thicket lay She prone,
 Where, only not dead because Divine, She herself had
 thrown !

VIII

Meanwhile nor garden nor field
 Would its herbs and flowers yield :
 The woods no more put forth their soft green leaves
 For the crumpled-horned beasts ;
 Gaunt hunger stalked beneath the cities' caves :
 Altars missed their wonted feasts ;
 Even each dew-fed reservoir of water kept
 Its sparkling fountains closely sealed because its Lady
 wept.

N

Then Zeus eager for relief
To the Mother's angry grief
Threatening famine, bade the Graces arm
Themselves and the Queen of Love
With all their joint artillery of charm —
Though they should leave night above —
And lead with them the sister Muses down to Earth
So, by hymn and dance, to conjure an aching breast
to mirth

\

Forth came from Olympus they
With surpassing bright and gay
Aphrodite at their head and a troop
Of boys their loudest to boom
On the cymbals with their brassiest whoop
And the Ox-skinned kettledrum —
Till the Goddess started from her starved care worn
sleep
In the shock of her amazement forgetting ev'n to weep !

N

Still as in a half trance Sh
Listened to the melody
Of the Muses singing, watched the Graces
Interlacing in the dance
And gazed with rapture on their sweet faces,
Now in retreat now advance,
While all through the Cyprian Queen assumed
command
By title of Beauty's right divine of the whole joyous
band

XII

Ne'er had felt Demeter this

Blissful wonder, wond'ring bliss.

Weeping She smiled once more, and smiling wept.

She touched a flute: [without breath

It warbled, and Nature at one note leapt

Into warm life out of death.—

Praise be to Music! healer it of Earth's alarms!

Music, that shall bring a Daughter home to a Mother's
arms.

BACCHANTES AT THEBES

Bacchæ vs. 64-162

FROM the land of Asia to Hellas we come
With one cry on our lips to the ancient home
Of Him Lord Divine of the dance and of song
Hither He has led us who to Tmolus belong,

Sweet puns ours grateful toil
To tread and kiss the soil
Where He drew his first breath
On the bosom of Death !

As we circle these halls hurry men and pray
Dionysus to pardon ! Out of my way
All that hymn not our God ! dare utter a word
But of glory to Dionysus our Lord !

Blest of fur destiny
Skilled in God's wisdom he
Who knows Him None are wise
But they of the Mysteries !

When our ears Lord of Revels opened to hear
Thy summons to the hells I shame straightway and fear
Fell off us as dust and over land and sea—
How we know not—old young that halt we followed
Thee !

When invisible Thou art,
 Thy image is in the heart :
 Thy pity, thy love how vast !
 How, too, Thy anger can blast !

Thousandfold paid were we for past years of ills
 By that first night when we burst into the hills
 With wild dancing and song to inaugurate
 The rites, ivy-crowned, of Cybele the Great !
 On that dread day his were we sealed
 By the Mysteries He revealed !
 His, with his spirit to abide,
 Companions of the Sanctified.

He calls, we come : glad now to this City proud :
 For here maid Semcle, the royal, was wooed
 In the plenitude of her conquering charms.
 By Zeus stooping from Olympus to her arms :
 And here, from a womb lightning-torn,
 Was our Lord Dionysus born ;
 And the mighty Sire cleft his own
 Flesh as a cradle for his son.

Thence—while hard-by lay more ashes the girl-
 bride—
 Remorseful lightnings keeping their watch beside—
 Was our Lord delivered duly, God from God :
 Horns upon his brows, snakes hissing from his rod :
 And Fate bade Him go forth,
 East and west, south and north.
 Without sword, shield, or bow,
 To lay citadels low :

To win empires by mirth with man and tame
brute

By minstrel's magic with cymbal and lute
The captive set free, and kings edicts defy
Inexplicable thunder in a blue sky

His Creed to dance and sing
Is the best worshipping
And to laugh and rejoice
More than wailing God's voice

Thebes that nursed Smuck's beauty to win
Zeus from his vows and plighted troth to His Queen
Our Lord Dionysus orders us to warn

Thee and Thine repent you in time of your scorn
Of his Godhead haste! no delay
Wave Thyrsus don festal array
Of fawn skins blue field flowers twine
Dick house fronts with oak leaves and pine

Laggards! build ye altars to Him! search the groves
To hallow your heads with the chaplets He loves
Your women already laud Smuck's son

Thousands tens of thousands dancing on and on,
Quitting distaff and shuttle and loom
Mother leaving babe bride her bridegroom
Up grim Kitheron's cavernous steep
As gad fly bitten riot and leap

Wake flute and drum that—where the Curtes
dwell

Unto Zeus's nurses in their Cretan cell—

A wild cry to the Corybantes sound
Passes to the Satyrs maddened at the sound

Hark to the drum as it roars,
 While higher and shriller soars
 The Phrygian flute, and our feet
 Time in a fine frenzy beat.

Men, ye are warned; we call with drum, flute and
 lute;
 Take your choice, cry for pardon, or stand ye
 mute;
 Be mad as we are, or sober—as ye will;
 For hear Him—do ye not?—we are for the hill!
 Strange the road: yet no guide we need;
 Our Lord is in front; He will lead.
 Tmolus, Kithæron—where we roam.
 The print of his feet makes all home.

Sisters, remember ye the long autumn nights—
 Weeks was it, or years back?—on Lydian heights.
 When away He would burst in chase of hill goat,
 Across torrents, crags, and catch it by the throat;
 Then throw Him down to sleep
 Among us on the steep.
 While Nature, as He slept,
 A solemn silence kept—

And before the midnight was come, start up, take
 A flaming pine torch, and bid us all awake.
 Ah! how glad some we to see his bright eyes glance,
 And join our Master in the triumphant dance;
 While at the touch of his feet divine,
 Flowed, in runlets, honey, milk, and wine,
 With clouds of frankincense earth had stored,
 Rich tribute to its laughing Lord.

Courage, sisters, again we shall Him behold
As on Tmolus where earth runs wine and streams
gold

See as we have seen—God Man—many and one—
Divers for the world the same for us alone,
Locks tossing a golden shower in the breeze,
Voice high and then low music in all keys
Eyes blue flashing stars mouth a red flower—
Girl for the charm God for the pow'r!

Hark! the drum booms its roar its Phrygian cries,
While the flute with notes soft and holy replies,
Hear ye Dionysus summoning his flock
To frolic through the forest from rock to rock,
When on Kitheron the mad rout
He leads—the whole air one wild shout
Fate Fate! None be adored
But Bacchus Bacchus King and Lord!

A PATRIOT MARTYR

Iphig in Aul., vv 1368-1401 : and 1434-1505.

“ WROTH with my Father, Mother ? ’tis unjust ;
How can we help but do what do we must ?
And Achilles, though noble he to stake
Life in my cause—how suffer him to take
Arms against a host ! Mother, what if thus
Mischance befell a stranger, and through us !

Listen my Mother, now that I have brought
Truth home to me ; yes, to my inmost thought.
I have resolved myself :—it is to die ;
And besides, I will die gloriously !
Read my heart, Mother : see, how fair a show,
And worthy of our race, my head to bow.
This hour upon nought else but me the whole
Of Hellas dwells—fears, hopes—with all its soul.
’Tis mine to loose or bind : to say the word,
Whether waste Phrygia with fire and sword—
For guilt of Paris venge us on his land—
Or tempt now and again a robber band
To repeat the foul act : to steal from Greece
Well-dowered brides, and hold their spoil in peace.
My death is a shield for Achean fame
It will scare pirates ; blest shall be my name.

And bethink thee what right thou hast to cling
 On my behalf so fondly to the thing,
 Called Life for thou didst bear me to be one
 In a million parts and not thine alone
 Count men of the spear ten thousand on shore
 Seamen as many skilled to ply the oar
 All straining to fight the foe even to death
 The sole check the saving of my poor breath
 To keep this justly falling balance straight
 Shall we fight among Greeks the fire of hate—
 Goad my Mother for me to set his life
 Against a whole host in desperate strife—
 Why would not Greece be paid by one Man's birth
 Did girls by thousands lose their shares of Earth?
 And now a Goddess has been pleased to choose
 This body of mine how can I refuse
 I a mortal? Rather while free I live
 Myself to Hellas body soul I give
 I come a willing sacrifice and when
 Our race shall be remembered among men
 For me shall stand in place of wadded pyres
 Sons of my womb the waste where once stood
 Troy!

Slaves from beyond the Pale steer here and flout
 Free, queenly Hellas? Perish the base thought!
 Silent my Mother? Weepst? Oh forbear!
 In pity cease! Shed thou for me no tear
 Make me not a coward I will not have
 Thee shut those dear locks clothe thee for a grave
 As of a lost child, I have stored for thee
 And me, not years but immortality!
 No more common earth is this body & doom
 An Altar Zeus's daughters, is my tomb!

Good Mother ! Thou believest me at last—
 I bring Greece deliverance, and have cast
 A fortunate lot ?—

‘ Askest what to say
 From me to my young sisters ? ’—That I pray
 Them not to mourn —

‘ And’ for Orestes here ? ’—
 Brother ! let me embrace thee, dearest dear.
 My help, all thou couldst !—

Mother, I entreat—
 Watch o’er him till he be of man’s estate—
 For I may not !—

A last look ! my one woe !
 ‘ Aught else to do for me ? ’—

Wilt not forgo
 Thy anger with my sire ? He loves me well.
 Although Greece better ; it is as I tell
 Thee of Life and Me.—

No ? Then, here we part.
 And, Mother, no more tears ! Spare this torn heart !
 No further ; my Father’s guards shall attend
 Me to the meadow where will be the end.

Proclaim silence, Heralds ; and, Maidens, sing
 To Artemis ! already the priests bring
 Barley to awake the flame ; the King stands
 Claspings the hallowed Altar with both hands ;
 And I come—to deliver, to destroy !
 • Champion of Hellas—stormer I of Troy !
 Pour ye the purifying water down ;
 And flow’rs ! my locks the sacrifice shall crown
 Around the temple dance ; around the shrine.—
 Blood to content the Oracle ? Lo ! Mine !

A single moment —

Mother I must keep
 Even Heaven's feast waiting, while for thee I weep
 Revered ah! how revered! a last Farewell!—

Dance ye Maidens again and dancing swell
 The Chant to Artemis pray Her yet free
 For my sake our spears wait them o'er the sea
 Then when our peans sound in froy let not
 Her name who sent the Victors be forgot!

Enough,—I cease to tread Pelagic earth
 No more Mycenæ mine that gave me birth
 And nursed me for the deed in Hellas I
 Triumph to do although by it I die!
 For me no more bright beaming Day that wells
 From deep fountains in the Heavens where Zeus
 dwells
 Adieu to Life! it and its Fate have done
 Their worst their best!—A knife's flash! I am
 gone
 Flutter where behind a black veil for me
 A new World waits and a new Destiny!

Witness Friends All I die of my free will!—
 And yet—I love thee Sunbeam love thee still!

TROY'S LAST NIGHT

Hecub. vv. 905-52.

"No more, my Ilium, will be heard thy glorious
 boast,
 That Thou hast never echoed the tread of alien host ;
 Alas ! warriors of Hellas, a tempest-cloud on Thee.
 Hide all that Thou wast from my soul's eye when it
 strives to see
 Thy crown of towers they have shorn ; soot fouls thy
 marble brow.
 Who even in fancy could care to walk thy pavements
 now !
 In the middle of the night descended on Me my
 doom :
 Then I perished out of life, entering a living tomb,—
 Sacrifice had been offered ; and at last the feast was
 done ;
 Music and dancing had ceased : all the joyous guests
 were gone ;
 On tired eyes sweet sleep was fluttering down ; my
 bridegroom lay
 In our chamber, on the couch—idle war-gear put away
 Upon the wall beside him—he not thinking ever more
 To view the hated sailor-throng trampling upon our
 shore.

I too would go to rest and set my golden mirror where
 It would light me while I boud within its snood my
 brided hair—

When a jubilant shout and screams and shrieks came
 ringing down

The night

Greeks! ours the citadel! Now ho! to
 sack the town!

My beloved one snatched his spear he was butchered
 by my side

No help from Diu whom I served ere I became a
 bride

As in waking, dream I was rocking on the salt sea
 flood,

Looking back on where my City my Ilium had stood
 then swooned and have breathed since but to call curses
 on the head

Of the Greek woman with her paramour and lawless
 bed

Gods! avenge Me on their marriage—nay none but
 it might seem

A spume from Hell's abyss a spiteful Demon's lustful
 dream!

Toss briny Ocean. Helen Ilium's bane forwakened
 Her play robbed Me of home Heav'n! let Her never
 reach her own!

POLYXENA

Hecub., vv 703-82

THE Achaean host hoping to give peace
 To dead Pelcides, ere it sailed for Greece,
 Had vengefully resolved to soothe his Ghost
 With the blood of Her he had loved and lost.
 The loathsome task was on Odysseus laid
 To announce the sentence and bring the Maid.
 With brave heart Polyxena had received
 Her doom, and went: not for herself she grieved!

Day waned, when lo! the Greek Herald.—He found
 Hecuba, locks dust-dabbled, on the ground.
 Hoping nought so much as that he was come
 To drag her to the shambles at the Tomb.
 Not therefore was he sent if by the Foe;
 The news, if dire, held glory in the woe.
 The Messenger himself was kind and old;
 You felt the tears within the tale he told:

“Thou knowest, Lady, Odysseus was sent
 Hither by my Lords, and how hence he went
 With thy Daughter to the sepulchre, where
 One universal whisper filled the air.
 The Hero's Son, taking her by the hand,
 Stationed her on the Tomb There a picked band
 Of youths fenced her about, lest she might flee—

I rightened fawn—in a spasm of agony
 Next he having with both hands lifted up—
 Filled to the brim—a vast all golden cup
 Bade me silence proclaim and at my sign
 And shout all sounds were hushed He, as the wine
 Ran trickling through his fingers cried aloud

Father I am fulfilling all I vowed,
 May thy Son's offering conduct thy Ghost
 Where—gift from Me and the Achaean host—
 It can drink its fill of pure virgin blood
 Retribution on Priam's traitor brood!
 In return be good to thy comrades free
 Our cables speed Us home where'er that be!

The host acclaimed he drew his golden blade
 Signs, to the chosen guard to bring the Maid
 Achæans—tens of thousands—stood around,
 In gleaming armour the sepulchral mound
 And on it all alone a young girl stood
 Viewed by myriads thirsting for her blood
 It might have been a lone spot she had sought
 On Idæ's slopes for solitary thought
 It might have been her Father's halls she trod,
 It might have been the Temple of her God
 No need of warriors to bar her flight
 Neither loved she life nor of death felt fright
 Nor wrath nor yet defiance—her sole pride
 As she had lived to be that when she died!

She had read the sign—standing on the hill
 By more than speech she counter signed her will
 In natural accents of a young maid
 Spoke she, but as she meant to be obeyed
 Low though her voice the hush the summer air
 Winged it, spread her meaning everywhere

" 'Argives,' she phrased it. 'Ye have overthrown
 My Sire's capital city, stone by stone.
 And deerce my sacrifice.—I hail death.
 But will not as a slave draw my last breath.
 Slay me 'tis your right: but in Heaven's face
 Free must I die, as it befits my race.
 I cannot brook the dead below should call
 Me who was born of royal rank, a thrall.
 Look! I will bare my skin with my own hand;
 Strike where Ye will, but strike at my command!'

"The host roared 'Yea!' and Agamemnon bade
 The guards to stand aside, nor touch the Maid.

"She heard; and plucking at her robe in haste,
 Rent it from neck down to her slender waist.
 Stripping her virgin breast and chest of snow.
 So lovely could no painter, sculptor, show;
 Then, with one knee upon the rough earth pressed.
 Spoke words the bravest, saddest, patientest:

'Good Executioner, if thou shouldst care
 To stab my heart, here is my bosom bare:
 If higher up, my throat is ready too!
 And the Princee, it might almost seem, with rue,
 That it was, as his father's son, his fate
 To divorce, from form so fair, a soul so great.
 Unwilling, willing—yet not so, nor so—
 Blindly struck whence founts of breathing flow.
 Life's springs burst: but heedful was she in death
 Seemly to fall!—

When she sighed her last breath,
 A weight lifted; hearts with remorse grown faint
 Glowed now, as at the parting of a Saint!
 Funeral gifts showered down; leaves some strewed
 Upon the body; some fetched from the wood

Pine to feed the poor — thousands sought to bring —
 Aught vestments or trinkets — in offering,
 Shame upon him who grudged — mean our too blind
 To see how passing high such heart and mind !

Thus was it Lady that thy Daughter died ,
 And I am here the Herald sent to guide
 Thee where my Chieft's thy loved one's obsequies
 Prepare hard by where our Achilles lies
 Old I but ne'er in peace or war have seen
 Woman than thee more hapless — slave or Queen —
 And of Mothers — happier —

The bliss

To have alive or dead — a Child like This !

ARISTOPHANES

ARISTOPHANES

My wish throughout is to produce by a few specimens a fair general view of the excellence of my sitter for the moment. Among Attic tragic dramatists—whenever sufficient has survived for a decision—a choice has not been difficult. It is not easy with Aristophanes. Humour wit variety of colour bitterness—sweetness with strength—are certain of recognition. His genius scintillates among many different properties. Contemporary judgment of his powers was expressed in the epigram attributed to Plato. The Graces searching for a shrine too harmoniously designed for a storm to fix on a fatal weakness anywhere were content with the soul of Aristophanes. True doubtless though to be able to prove it we ought to be contemporaries and fellow townsmen.

Very often he seems to be about to deliver himself of a satisfying lyric when the demand of the comedy carries him off. He is thus diverted in the *Clouds* and *Knights*. Less in the *Birds* for instance bursts such as even in my inadequate verse the call of King Hoopoe to Progne whom Aristophanes chooses for his Nightingale. The melody flings itself to and fro grave to gay insolent to gentle with a sureness in which all three Graces might have securely lodged. None of

his majestic fellow-dramatists could from this point of view have surpassed, perhaps equalled him. In his singing is more of a bird's trill than elsewhere in Greek drama, so far as time has suffered us to judge. He must have known, felt, he had a theme where his genius found the exact notes to suit it. The misfortune of our modern age is that it happens also to be the only song of sustained melody and length to illustrate and justify the universal praise. All the existing comedies abound in lyrical lines;—if they had but been available in draughts, and not in mere sips!

Readers, however, will find full sources in Hookham Frere's and B. B. Roger's admirable translations, though Frere's only of four Plays. If they wish for an Imitation, let them read Dean Mansel's incomparable Chorus of the Clouds in his "Phrontisterion."

KING HOOPOE TO THE NIGHTINGALE

ÆTIA VI 202-23

SURPRISE my sweet Mate still ?
Awake and set flowing each liquid note
At thy music's fountain-head to trill
From the oped gateway of thy tawny throat
Hallowed old rings to thy Darling and mine
Itys, of hymns Divine
Hark ! clear through the full leafage of the new
Pierces the strain, and Phœbus, hearing thine
Tunes his lyre the long lament to renew
Till it overflows Zeus's Thronè and all
The Heavens and the blue
Æther while at the Golden-haired One's call
Gathers on Olympus the Blessed Chœur,
And with my Mate's own Itys Itys' cry
Takes up the symphony of Apollo's lyre—
Both dirge and lullaby !

•

LEADER OF BIRD CHORUS

Aves. vi 676-783

"O my Darling! my sweetest Sweet!
 Can it be mine once more to greet
 Her whose song I dream in the grove;
 My one theme could I sing of love.
 Though only now that I rejoice
 In Thee, sing I: for Thou'rt my voice!
 Strike up, Flute! tawny Darling, sing!
 Hark! her voice has brought the Spring!"

With the Nightingale.

"Hither, blear-eyed creatures that, Men, you are by
 birth,
 Do-nothings, figures of clay, dull compounds of earth;
 Souls frail as Autumn leaves, May-flies without the
 wings,
 Shadows from day-dreams, death's crop, miserable
 things!
 Listen to Us who from pure Æther draw our breath,
 Who always Are, existing free of Age and Death.
 Thoughts we think decay not. To your uttermost try
 To understand our tale of Being in the sky,
 Of Birds, and how Gods, Chaos, Erebus, began,

Then you'll know much more than Men ever learned
from Man

This was Nature's order Chaos and Night the first
Irebus wide Hell next though yet there were none
occured

Earth was not or Air or Heaven or Sun and Day
But it occurred to wing'd Night & wind to fly
In the multitudinous bosom black and cold
Of Erebus Due--though time was not--Hours told
Issued long on Frost with golden wings behind
That stormily flapped and fl shed as a North west wind
So Dire was and having nothing else to do
As he flew about waste Tartarus to and fro
Made love to Chaos sister of his mother Night
Hatching Us for whom somehow he manufactured
Light

Last work the rest between Us below above
For We needed to fly perch feed and He to love
Thence a hotchpotch of Irebus Chaos Night and
Hell

Air water ground and fire for good and bad to
dwell

Heaven thus came about with Ocean and this Earth,
And the Blessed Gods imperishable had birth
But it is a clear and indisputable truth

That we had long been Gods when these were in their
youth

For we were Love's first born endowed by Him with
wings

And made His distributors of all happy things
Thus who bke us to mark the Seasons in their train?
Saw? Note the scream as he wends southwards of
the crane,

And the hint the shipmaster too may take to stow
His rudder and bide on shore till kind winds shall
blow

See, the kite circles after prey : 'tis time to shear
The flocks needful at the opening of the year.
Doff your woollen cloak ; surely, that is not your wear,
When Mistress Swallow darts in the bright spring-tide
air

And however you may feign to adore young Gods
At Shrines, you fancy are their favourite abodes —
Ammon, Delphi, Dodona for cares near your hearts,
Woong, trading, fighting, you seek no foreign parts ;
You search your home sky, watching it for one chance
flight,

Aid by the objects there, discern the wrong and right.
Talk of Divination : pray, now, what is your word
For a dip into the future ? Why, nought but ' Bird ' !
' Bird ' for any start--when a slave cracks plates or
glass,

A sudden sneeze rapped out, the braying of an ass !
Let the rich spend on their Apollos ; you, the poor,
Have one just as good in the sparrow at your door !

" Could you have Gods better ? Use
Us as yours for Prophet, Muse.
Only tell Us what you will—
Hot, or cold, luke-warm, or chill,
Wind to nip the Dog-star, calm
That sleeps on the wheat like balm.
Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring
Nestle underneath my wing.
Whisper just the blend you need.
Served you shall be with thought-speed.

Not like Zeus by way of pomp
 Sit We on clouds nursing dumps
 We love to flit where man are
 And be for each a good star
 To bring your whole household health
 Bright Youth peaceful age and wealth
 Sleep on down softer than silk
 Mirth dances feasts and birds milk
 Full bliss o'erladen the tomb
 As sink roses from full bloom

Muse of the Thicket! my Own
 With whom on ash tree alone
 Pursuing thy varied note
 I would through my tiny throat
 Hymn the praise of Pan and seek
 Strains that as to airy peak
 Cybele's lions advance
 Her Car might inspire the dance
 Help me as Phryneus had
 Where I too like him may feed
 On ambrosia I'll distil
 Into music such as will
 Mellow what bitter must grate
 In my lot assigned by Fate

When the nightingale full mut
 Ceasing warbling voice and flute
 The Swans, from where on the banks
 Of Hebrus sat their serried ranks
 Took up—was it the appeal
 To all humankind to kneel

Praying Air's Powers of their grace
T accept homage from Man's race?
We know only there rang out
Through luminous clouds a shout
That drove wild beasts and the herds
Cowering before the Lord Birds.
Blue sky overlay the tide.
And Olympus all replied
By repeated thunderings,
Whereat wonder seized its Kings,
And Graces and Muses cried for joy, or shrieked in
dismay.
Though which we are not told, and it's impossible to
say!

SONG OF THE CLOUDS

Nubes vs. 273-90 and 299-313

CLOUDS that have been sleeping upon the meadows,
wake and rise

For though hoarse Ocean begot us our home is in the
skies

See! wings sparks of living light as Dawn touched the
dew we were

Open out and are bearing us into the Upper Air
There we float each morn a new birth for though in
thought

The rainbow we leave behind us means we have come to
nought

We are eternal whether darkness visible black night
Or as now re woven into a golden fleece of light
Space is our playing field so our pastime is mounting
high

Over some loftiest peak clad in forests to desert
Watch towers far away that guard the harvests, and
the soil

That nursed them in its bosom from becoming foemen's
spoil

Or to drink in the murmurs of rushing rivers and
roar

Of the solemn-voiced Sea hurled itself upon its shore

THEOCRITUS

The first impression in passing from Greek verse of the Golden Age or Ages to that of the composite Alexandrine and Sicilian schools is of a descent from Groves of the Muses to a Library. In exemplars of the class we are always being reminded or seek to remind ourselves of books. Singers of the period were sensible of the weakness. They attempted to cure or dissemble it by assuming a rustic personality. Probably all more or less fell into the habit affected bucolic piping, though this has spared complete illustrations only by one of the number.

To prove the difficulty without exposing the absurdity of the experiment as in Pope's attempt it is enough to refer to Virgil's *Eclagues* except the 'Pollio'. The Mantuan failure enhances our respect for Theocritus, who most nearly succeeded. A Memory is a nosegay of Greek country scenes. Daphnis is but little inferior and Daphnis and Menalcas aims higher without loss of simplicity. Still, there is an aggressive unreality to me about it all even and especially, the famous Cyclops and Calisto. When it is best done to borrow a well known censure the surprise is at the pains to attempt an impossibility. Theocritus ranks high for greater qualities. The *Adonisism* and

"A Fisherman's Dream" are two perfect dramas in miniature. Never was a gift more exquisitely offered than in "An Ivory Distaff." But for a story-teller in verse match me the poet of "The Infant Heracles" and of "Hylas!"

He is admirable because manifestly he enjoys the romance as he evolves its course. During it his fancy broods over every touch or touch to be added. Hylas is so unforeseeingly absorbed in the fulfilment of his service, unless for a passing glance at the bright flowers around, at the sparkle of the bubbles as he dips the pitcher, with a hope perhaps of praise for despatch by his two mighty heroes. A moment, and boundless despair, with a delirium of joy to the triad of Nymphs, and full content for the poet. Satisfaction for him is as unmistakable in the wondrous myth of Heracles and the Dragons. There the roll of the few verses, unlike the leap of the fountain, is slow as the drum-beat in a funeral march. Theocritus has this power of compelling sympathy with the distilling of his fancies, whatever the text. On any subject he is thoroughly companionable. It matters not if it be a day's sightseeing by two gossiping Dorian dames in a Palace of the Ptolemies, dream-telling between a pair of starveling fishermen—portraits to the life—a music duel, with two winners—a Midsummer holiday, Bucolics—Daphnis, Cyclops, what-not—or most innocent love-weaving on an Ivory Distaff!

A MEMORY

Idyll VII (part of)

Hail, deep bosomed Midsummer ! to recline
 On freshly cut green branches of the vine
 And the sweet mastiesh while above our heads
 Elms and poplars quiver and intertwine

Heard ye not Comrades how the stream beside
 From its source in the cave where its Nymphs abide
 Murmured of mysteries I fain had read
 But too fast ave faster its ripples glide *

On the boughs flame coloured cicadas strung,
 Endless chains—chatter as when June was young
 And from afar the fluting of a thrush
 Rippled from thick acanthus brakes among

Crested larks finches trilled the turtle dove
 Tired not in his bower to woo his love,
 Brown bees flitted round the brook Summer breathed
 In frutage through garden field orchard grove

Trees pear and apple need not there be pressed
 For yield they roll at each passing step a feast
 Plums—the boughs break under their purple load
 Grapes haste mature their juice to glad a guest

Wine of such brand had cheered a future God.
When Heracles and Chiron shared abode

In garden and grotto like this; and, broached
By the Nymphs, gave spirit that fired the mood

Of the mild Cyclops into hurling rocks.
And dancing, to the mirth of Etna's stocks

And stones: not his wonted innocent draughts
On the high pastures from his fleecy flocks.

As myself couched by the stream in the shade.
Lulled by music birds and cicadas made.

They brought me there a cup crowned to the
brim
From the jar that in the fire's warmth was laid.

I drank, and pledged my faith I would return
When in July the sickle should have shorn

The standing wheat and barley, and have spread
For the brisk threshers the abounding corn:

Yes; and would, as joyous, I shook, the while,
On the winnowing fan, the dwindling pile.

Draw from Demeter, as adust she stood,
Clasping sheaves, poppies an approving smile.

Ah! blest garden-land, where the Muses pour
Nectar for a Bard, and bees each bright hour

Distil honey for him: and his gay toil
Is but to toss grain on a threshing-floor!

A FISHERMAN'S DREAM

Idyll XXI

WANT is a keen taskmaster—hard the load
 And incessantly it applies the goad
 Work is not ready to hand—men must go
 And plague their wits to find what they can do
 Then toil they with their muscles as they may
 Can eels not with the labours of the day
 It mocks them with wakefulness long ere light
 Having made them sport for visions of the night
 Two fishermen I knew—they shared between
 Them a wattled hut where I have often been
 On the pebbles for they were old and poor
 They had strewed dry seaweed a make-shift floor
 As bed and pillows—others they had none—
 Bundles of leaves were piled to lean upon
 Anywhere rough implements of their trade
 Baskets, rods, hooks, bait lines, mits, cords were laid
 These with slops for cushions a pair of oars
 And a crazy propped boat made their whole stores
 Scant chattels—No cooking utensils—Bare
 Subsistence—hand to mouth—nothing to spare
 No neighbours had they but the sea that pressed
 Them close and poverty hugged to their breast
 Such their state—and fixed when the moon, or night

Howbeit, gently loosened I the hold
 Of the greedy hooks on my precious gold ;
 Then, tugged by ropes the creature up the shore ;
 And, calling all the Gods to witness, swore
 That never would I tempt the sea again.
 But turn Gold-king, and on dry land remain !
 On that I woke.

To starve, and keep my vow ?
 Forswear ; be damned ?

Say, which. I bow."

COMRADE.

" ' You ' neither caught the fish. nor swore the oath.
 No need to be alarmed ; illusions both ;—
 Like most dreams—though we may dream open eyes.
 Your dream-rock a likely place ? Hope no prize :
 But search for catch to cat.

To starve, your wish ?
 Sleep, dream, in work-hours ; and hook golden fish ! "

AN IVORY DISTAFF

LAMB LXXXIII

JUST a distaff! Athens soon to women And I
 would
 Mine to Thaugenis in Miktus might prove as good!
 I have a Bard's second sight you shall see you need
 not fear
 Distaff to fare less gently in your treatment there than
 here
 Lo! your new mistress before a green tender reed
 wreathed Shrin
 In stately Miktus praying the Queen of Love Divine
 To calm the sea for one bound from Syracuse to
 embrace
 Nereus seion and hear of such harmonious C notes
 Next yourself—may I not clasped by two white arms
 and kissed
 By rosiest lips?—was ever distaff as you so blis?—
 Yes, and joy again as amid her troop of laughing
 girls
 Pressed by your Lady's dainty ankle your wheel
 whirling twirls
 Turning the soft floers from the ruts twice shorn, year
 by year

Leaping headlong from Etna's snowy slopes, and dream
 On a leafy couch I spread with white heifer hide.
 A Son'-wester's spoil that dashed strays down a cliff's
 side
 Is the couch less soft for my loss in the beasts? less
 fair
 Is June that next follows the Dog-Star's blasting
 glare?
 Does a lover, while clasped within two milk-white
 arms,
 Let clouds of parental wrath darken present charms?"

MENALCAS.

"Nor do I complain No Mother can mine excel.
 I lie on her lap: nor could elsewhere better dwell.
 Etna is She; and though She may both scowl and
 storm.
 To me She is aye gracious: lovely too in form.
 She gave me a fine cavern in a hollow rock,
 With sheep and goats, ever so many; such a flock
 As none will ever see but in a dream: my bed
 Is furnished from their fleeces; with their skins I
 spread
 A carpet to warm the stone flooring for my feet.
 In fancy I can smell, cooking for me to eat.
 A stew of dainty entrails—nothing else so good!—
 For my Mother finds me, not house alone, but food
 Fuel also; oak-boughs in Summer; and, when blow
 Icy winds, and the tracks are buried deep in snow,
 Weathered beechen fagots heaped plentifully on
 My hearth—all, loving Etna's bounty to her Son!
 Winter I mind as little as the toothless feel
 Of taste for nuts beside a dinner of fine meal!"

PEASANT

'Excellent both' I should have found it hard to
say

Whether of the pair has done better with his lay
I have a crook & young tree from our land and
grown

So workmanlike craftsmen might claim it for their
own

Accept it Daphny

For this still spiral and great
That I caught on the Icarian beach with bait—
A thing of beauty and the fish within so fine
As to make enough for the five of us to dine—
Menaless it is your prize But beware the din
If you set yours to its mouth trumpeting therein!

THROCRITUS

Pastoral Muses! Will Ye not again draw near
As when I voiced you to these hard men? let them
hear

My accents your song! mock me not with my poor
verse

When I hope it is your melody I rehearse!

Ye bound me Minister and Priest—bade me rely

On your presence As a cicada will reply

Echoing cicada ant to ant hawk to hawk

So promised Ye that when my lips shall move Ye
talk

Ye are my heart my very life! Bliss that Ye come
Hither not day by day lodgers but to your home!

Yet both strange and sweet as sleep to cure and
disease

Springtide to March in dry places honey to bees!

Hail ! warrant for pure joy, that no foul spell, nought
base

Shall trespass whereso'er your feet have left a trace.

Hail ! Ye that fragrance breathe from lowliest flower.

And disdain in Man nothing but what will lower ! "

THE INFANT HERACLES

IDYLL XXIX

MEWENA Amphitryon's Wife had washed and fed
And put Babies Heracles and Iphicles to bed
Heracles ten months old was elder by one night
And the bed a shield Amphitryon's spoil in fight
The Mother stroking the two darlings' heads thus
spoke

Sleep my children a sweet sleep and refreshed
awake

Brother Mother's life blest be your bed ! and morn's
rise—

May it unseal two happy pairs of baby eyes !
Murmuring her Good Night, she rocked the nightly
shield

And sleep as she pruned and rocked settled on each
child

But when at midnight turning the Great Bear
inclines

To set and its shoulder against Orion shines,
Two huge Serpents stole thither shunning to be seen,
Dread monsters coil on coil, gleaming steel blue sheen
They forced, like the gradual roll of Ocean's tide
The hollow door posts of the chamber to gape wide —

Bribed tools they of schemes and spite of a vengeful
Wife

To crush a rival's spawn, and grind it out of life!
At full length the pair grovelled in the dust along;
Baleful fire flamed from their eyes, venom spat each
tongue

Nor, though the fell mouths watered as savouring prey,
Zeus intervened—His blood must find itself a way!
Still, His heart beat there: and each such heart-beat
is light.

So in the room was something, neither day, nor night.
That aroused the two Babes. Iphicles, with a wild
Scream at sight of the fangs gloating over the shield.
Wrenched the coverlet off, racking his infant brain
How to tumble himself down, and cheat death, in vain.
His twin spurned flight: and just below where gullets
gasped.

Slavering poison—by Gods as men dreaded—grasped,
Each hand, a windpipe, careless that the coils twined
round

His body, so long as in his grip they as fast unwound.
No cry he raised, none more of triumph than dismay.
Tearless, fearless, two stark dragons on him, he lay!

Meanwhile Almena had awakened Amphitryon:
“Haste! I tremble: wait not to put your sandals
on.

Hark! 'tis Iphicles; there is terror in his cries;
As you love me, up, Dearest! brush sleep from your
eyes:

Still it is early night: the dawn is long away;
Yet, look, the walls are visible, though hours off day.”
He leaped forth at the call, stretching up—the first
thought—

His hand to pull the sword down hanging richly
wrought

In its sheath of black lotus wood above the bed
When suddenly the radiance ceased and instead
Night resumed with darkness and silence as before
Except from the slaves quarters echoed their sleep
snore

 Ighits ! shouted Amphitryon much enduring
bolts,

Strike sparks from the embers drive fast home the
doors bolts !

 The whole household stirred and throughout the
mansion blazed

With lamplight

 But oh ! the hurricane that was raised
The frenzy ! when lo ! the Babe in each clenched soft
fist

Held—choked the grinning jaws—a stone dead noisome
beast !

His own sole care being with bubbling bursts of joy
Curgles of merriment, as one's with a new toy
To toil on—the rest at gaze shuddering—and drag
The coils for his sire to play with fangs and poison
lug

Tired at last he dropped asleep and was put to rest
Fucked up warm he slumbered—1 young bird in its
nest

Gladly Amphitryon sought for himself the same
Relief and dreamt happy dreams until morning came
Iphicles shuddering passionately distressed
Alcmena sought to comfort fondling in her breast

 Long she lay awake and when other inmates slept
Pondering night's marvels an anxious vigil kept

Then, at cockerow, she told Tiresias the tale.
 Imploring of him the truth, whether good or bale :
 " For none human ward off, when spun the Fates'
 Decree !

Much wisdom though Thou hast, this, Prophet, learn
 of Me ! "

" Courage, Grandchild of Perseus," the blind Seer
 replied :

" Women's theme, as, spinning, they sing at eventide.
 Will be ' Aemena ' : name for Argos to adore !
 Yea, by the light that visits my dead orbs no more.
 Glory in this Babe, that, such as he is, thy son.
 He will grow a man as, infant, he has begun.
 Heir he to a mortal's strength of muscles, and heart
 Within them, a God's, that shall play an earthly part.
 Be content with his sojourn here that it will prove
 How all Earth's scourges bow to Heaven's race above :
 For though he must twelve ruthless ordeals undergo,
 And be purged by fire first of mortal flesh Below.
 Olympus is his birthright ; he shall share its feasts.
 Even ally with Gods that hired sly, felon beasts
 To rend his baby limbs

But while he labours here
 The name ' Heracles ' will be one of love and fear.
 This shield he lies in, for weak and the oppressed
 A cradle where they too may sleep, and take their rest ;
 The dream-smile upon his lips strengthen to a charm
 To nerve righteous wrath, seal meekness against harm ;
 And the shade of the lion skin that he shall wear,
 Falling on a kid, warn wolves, wild or human, to
 forbear."

ADONIA/USE

THE VI

PRAXINOE

' Sit down dear Gorgo you know you are late
I thought you would not come but meant to wait

GORGON

Well had you seen you would wonder I'm here
At all Ah! the crowd and everywhere
Teams four abreast, blocking up the whole street
And muled boots trampling upon sandalled feet!
'Twas brave to come for Darling I must say
You really do live out of the way

PRAXINOE

' My husband's whim that we who share one heart
Should live as far as possible apart
Jealous mad on purpose he chose this den
For dogs to bark in, not a home for men
Always so If I make a friend his joy
Is to contrive a breach—just to annoy

GORGON

' Little pitchers have long ears take care
In your talking, saw you not the child stare?

PRAXINOL.

"You could not, Ducky, think I meant Papa
By a bad man who did what vexed Mamma?"

GORGO.

"Good Papa!

"Saints! a sharp Babe! Pick and choose
Your confidences—mind your *p's* and *q's*!"

PRAXINOL.

"Lately—not to be too specific—He
Went to buy powder-and-paint stuff for me.
Guess what it was He brought back at noon?
A parcel of salt, the long lazy loon!"

GORGO.

"My Man, Diocleidas, is quite as bad
As your Demon; the follies he commits! March-mad!
Yesterday he bought five fleeces—dog's hair!
You cannot imagine the filth they were;
Not worth the cost of cleaning; and the price!
Cash burns holes in his pockets in a trice!"

"But, dress! robe, and clasped petticoat! You
know
The Queen has undertaken this year's show.
Trust Arsinoë for costliness; none
Do things as well; all wealth can, will be done!"

PRAXINOL.

"I shall rejoice to see, and to report
To the poor souls that cannot go to Court."

GORGO

"Quick, we hard-worked wives have no time to
waste
Holidays like idlers who only feast

PRAXINOL

Five minutes to wash
Fool! towels instead
Of water! Plague upon all slaves home bred!
Content eats!—to be soft!
At last! Pour—stop!
Clumsy creature! look here—my shift's a sop!
Clean before Heaven! This key fits the lock
Of the big chest—go and fetch the frock

CORO

Perfect the full style! none could have become
You better! and cost—made up—from the loom!

PRAXINOL

Rumours! clear eight pounds! but I would die
Rather than live to walk about a gny!
Parasol! Girl—the cloak—see it hangs well
No Child! Bugbear catch you to sleep and sell
Mamma would rather hear her Pretty squall
Than have horse bite foot and make Biby crawl!
Play Tiddy with Master Lopyrion
Call the dog in—but till the feast be done!

Outside

Look! the crowd! and we expect without harm
To squeeze a passage through this monstrous swarm!

To mine; together, we will make a fight.

Murder! my summer veil slit down—my best!

'Kind Sir, if you would be for ever blest
By Zeus, lift your foot off my dress!'"

STRANGER.

"Truth! I

Cannot; but, Madam, all the same, I'll try."

PRAXINOË.

"This rampant mob human? I see no sign
Of Man about it—a herd of wild swine!"

STRANGER.

"A rude tussle! but, spite of waves and blast.
We survive, and are in our port at last!"

PRAXINOË.

"Yes, thanks to you, Sir, and to you alone!
May Heav'n reward the pity you have shown!

'Ah! where is that unlucky Eunoë?

Being hustled—Break through! well done! Here's
she!"

~~Good!~~ we're safe. what matters the storm outside?"
As Bridegroom quoth to soaked friends when locked in
with Bride!"

GORGON.

"Praxinoë, the embroideries! haste!
Who but Gods durst wear them? the fineness,

PRAXINOS

Our Lady Athens ' whose brain hut thine
 Could have conceived workmanship all Divine ?
 The forms that stand about and those that move—
 Might they not think and talk and war and love ?
 At what skill may not the Thing Man arrive ?
 Vain Him on the silver couch ' dead ' alive ?—
 Delicate down just shading lips and cheek—
 One would not start if He began to speak !
 'Tis Adonis, imaged as till they come
 To carry him to Aphrodite's home '

SECOND STRANGER

For mere sake cease your chatter clatter '
 Tiresome turtle doves ' still flat still flatter !

(ORGO

' And who are you ' whence, please your right to
 rate
 Syriusan ladies—tell them they prate ?
 From Corinth like Bellroplon we trace
 Our descent can you claim a nobler race ?
 Dorians from Peloponnesus sprung—
 Why should we not employ the Doric tongue ?
 If now we fall mute tis not for your airs
 But She who sang the Sperchas dirge prepares
 To hush ' Adonis and tis not worth while
 At one note's loss to fling back mud of Nile ' '

(It end of Hymn)

Clever Thing ' good luck hers to have been born
 With wits ' and for song—an amazing turn !

But I'm late ! and a fasting husband ! what,
When Diocleidas happens to be that !
Hungry, He'd snap off anybody's head
Beware of wild beasts when they're not full fed ! ”

“ However, I've viewed Adoms : the while
Till he return I'll live upon his smile ! ”

HYLAS

Idyll VIII

HERACLES was probation God the love
He cherished for Hylas was from Above
His heart of bronze sensible of no qualm
At a lion's onset would lose its calm
With a thought he was not by to bar offence
To the lad life and limb and innocence
With a father's large hopes and fears he veined
To instruct in all good that he had learned
Glad to foresee the graceful boy would grow
Brave and famous as he without the woe
A yoke fellow trained after his own mind
True and loyal a pattern to mankind
Never were they apart, from when Dawn's white
Steeds started for Heaven to fall of night
What time perchers watch their nest for a shake
Of mother's wing to signal laden bark
So when Jason called the flower of Crete
To join his Crusade for the Golden Fleece
Heracles was among the first aboard
And Hylas uncounted came with his lord

Well rowed the oarsmen, well the helmsman steered,
The Dark Rocks themselves had been safely cleared
First sunk and jostling from this date they stand

Isles. Argo's monument. on either hand.
 And. swooping. like an eagle, on its breast
 The sea tossed the ship through: to wait at rest
 Within the mouth of Phasis. wintering,
 Secure from sharp frosts, and rough winds, till Spring
 Should call lambs abroad. and the Pleiads rise
 To remind the crew of its enterprise
 Then. all re-embarked. and. with three days' aid
 From south-west winds, the Hellespont had made.
 In the Propontis—the Kianian shore—
 Rich ploughland that—they found where they could
 moor.

Disembarked. the Thirty's wont was in pairs.
 Sorted at choice, to divide household cares.
 Heracles Telamon. were messmates: so.
 One cut rushes and galingal, that grow
 Largely on the salt meadows there. and spread
 To ease the rigour of a sailor's bed.
 His comrade dressed a meal. by mother wit.
 With ready appetites to season it.
 Golden-haired Hylas was assigned the least
 Toilsome task, to fetch water for the feast.

He shouldered a bronze pitcher. and soon found
 A fountain bubbling up in oozy ground
 About, green maidenhair. swallow-wort blue
 Bloomed, with more wildings of many a hue.
 An instant before. in the jets and spray
 The Naiads of the Spring had been at play.
 Beings not of Earth, or Heaven—rustics' dread—
 That never slumber. nor alive, nor dead—
 They awaited sunset to dance and sing:
 Euneicha, Malis, Nuchcia. with face of Spring.
 At the boy's footfall, they dived, saw not him;

And hasting—friends athirst—to fill to brim
 He stooped and half across with body leant
 To dip,

when a rush of hands, as he bent,
 A rapture of delight had whirled the Three wild
 At sight of the wondrous beautiful child
 Tender and soft, never could they have thought
 Of loveliness like this they were distraught!
 As for him torn from his dear lord and all
 Worth his care falling as a storm might fall
 He woke—from life or death?—weeping and laid
 Upon the white knees of one smiling maid
 While two dried his tears by lip hair and hand
 With caresses he could not understand
 They pitied could not part with him!

And here
 Closed for strangers Hylas and his career
 A star will shine in the Heavens a brief space
 Then plunges in the sea leaving no trace
 Sutors grieve not for the lost star but hail
 The promise in its fall of a fair gale
 Hylas was mourned for a moment—no more
 Only one pulse beat quicker than before!

Ah! heartbreak for Heracles!

‘Gone the lad!’

He snatched bow arrows wonted club and had
 Tracked him to the fountain there roared thrice,
 Been answered as from far, by a thin voice
 On the Hero the Boy's cry of despair
 Worked as on bearded bon in its fur
 The distant cry of a strayed fawn His heart
 Throbbled too with hunger—a father's—

The smart

A rankling longing, as to clasp a ghost,
 Drove him through pathless wastes after the Lost !
 Frenzied pilgrimage o'er a world of space—
 Prize ever receding in the blind race—
 Exchanging fleshly pangs in deserts curst
 By a pitiless sun with heat and thirst
 That he felt not, for agonies of soul
 Lashing him to'ards an impossible goal ;
 Till, unpaid for heart and faith broke, he found
 " Self " in Colchis, whither was Argo bound.

Among his Labours none like this : the rest
 He wrestled with, and threw ; here, in his breast,
 A void demanded to be filled in vain
 Nor least for such as Heracles, the pain
 To plead as an excuse, a private grief,
 For breach of duty that was first and chief :
 To desert the post he had filled aboard
 The Argo ; he false to his plighted word ;
 Forfeit the glory of dowering Greece
 With a timeless trophy, the Golden Fleece.
 His comrades felt for him, and had approved
 Pious search for the bright boy whom all loved,
 But could not outstay dawn—Sails woo'd the air ;
 How suspect Heracles would not be then ?
 Of Greek champions to be defaulter He !
 So, with sad heart, Jason put out to sea.

And Hylas ! sunk in a deep pool.

And dead ?

How not ?—with water—fathoms—overhead.
 If Nymphs did the deed, and for love—what then !
 To die for love, is no rare doom for men.
 Nay, Beings so beautiful could not have
 Drawn Boy so beautiful down to his grave.

We read his comforters pursued their quest
Till they assured him life among the Blest
Zeus could not refuse when three Naiads prayed
To have their charming prey immortal made

Happy ' if ward of Heracles ne'er thought
Eternity of ease was dearly bought
By loss of a mortal career when days
Close in a hero's even song of praise
And blind Homer harps of Telamon's son
Door of deeds that Hylas might have done !

BION AND MOSCHUS

BION AND MOSCHUS

By a strange coincidence time has spared us *one* fine poem of each and similarly for each a delightful accompaniment of gait. Slight as are Bion's 'Innocent Boyhood' and 'Leda Astray' they are for ease and point without a flaw. Often as they are read they seem ever fresh. But more substantial matter has survived than these very trifles for belief in their author's poetic power. The 'Epitaph on Adonis' gathers together the ragged clues of a tangled legend into a coherent whole. It overflows with melody. No lament for Aphrodite's love is extant equalling it in beauty even in intelligibility amid all that chaos of crazy liturgies.

In serious verse Moschus compares with Bion's Adonis in his elegy on Bion himself. In poetic literature it ranks deservedly high. My attempt at a version indicates at least that it contains noble thoughts on a dead master's genius. It is not entirely my fault if it be judged that the *dirge* at times labours. May I be allowed on the other hand to hope that the translation of a mother's appeal does not obscure overmuch the brilliancy of a marvellous inspiration of humour?

Farewell to the Pair' and alas that one headstone should suffice for the monument of two such as the

scanty remains prove these to have been! Who can credit such a double paradox as that the half-dozen brilliant pieces in existence were the whole on which fervent contemporary admiration of the couple rested!

ADONIS

Eion Idyll I

ADONIS the Beautiful is dead ! weep
 Loves ! and Thou Aphrodite off with sleep !
 Rend thy sapphire raiment beat thy white breast
 Up and to the heights in black sackcloth dressed
 Quiet ! Thou wilt find him in the morning wood
 Dear Life passing in the gored thigh's dark blood
 Ah ! that th' light fading in the glazed eyes
 Will not reflect thine on him as he dies
 Or tell him that Immortal passion flouting Death
 still sips
 The love he can no longer savour on his pale cold lips !

Who what laments him not ? Every hound
 Whumpers knowing him dead the Nymphs around
 Chant dirges, sing his praises But no smart
 Equals the ache in Aphrodite's heart
 Hair loosed unkempt about the brakes forlorn
 She wanders barefoot by the brambles torn
 See her traceable by the bloodstains rose
 Hark ! she calls through the glades on her lost love !
 And was this our Queen Cyprus of graces Divinely rare
 Whose sole pride and conceit it is to be no longer
 far ?

All Nature mourns. forests of oak. and hills,
 Broad rivers. and plains, dancing mountain rills.
 Earth's bosom from the blood the boar's tusk shed
 Paints the varied blossoms that it sends forth red ;
 As Cytherea cries her Darling's name,
 Echo, catching the grief. returns the same.
 If spirits could but have exchanged for once,
 And his have reflected hers in response.
 How eagerly would She have absorbed him within her
 soul,
 Making of one last kiss from a fountain of love—the
 whole !

Mad : and She knows it : " Be left enough breath
 To blow passion hot in the frost of death !
 Doomed thou wert. and hast flitted to Styx's shore.
 Whence its grim King releases souls no more.
 Or its Queen. Can I vie with her in might ?
 If in life—in death all is hers by right.
 Aught lovely. And Adonis. who was Mine—
 Free Adonis ? I doubt thee. Proserpine !
 Fled as a shadow. faded as a vision of the night—
 Fool to have fancied sheer longing could bring thee back
 to light ! "

Dead ! Yet beauty is not disdained by Death :
 And Death shall yield the dead no loveless wreath.
 From tears of Cypris the wind-flower grows :
 Of blood of Adonis is born the rose.
 Back ; none dying awaits Thee in the glade.
 Adonis on thy bed of leaves is laid.
 Oftentimes hast Thou found him there asleep :
 View him lying dead ; and Thou wilt not weep.

Hadst never seen him living — never until life had fled—
 Thou wouldst have cast off Immortality to be his,
 Dead !

Put on him soft apparel wherein blest
 With beauty like to his are wont to rest
 Heap crowns flowers of all hues though they die,
 When they find he is dead in sympathy
 Match his breath — scents inestimably rare
 That vainly burn and expire in despair
 Train the young Loves — rather than sharpen darts
 Upon the whetstone of poor human hearts—
 To loose sandals though from dead feet bathe from
 gold ewers the wound
 With wings whispering to marble brows persuade sleep
 deep and sound

Yes he is dead and yet too sweet and fair
 For the Underworld to hope to keep him there
 Weep Loves and Hymeneus as is meet
 In place of wreaths and minstrelsy to greet
 Happy brides and bridegrooms bid Hymen wring
 Hands and chant a funeral dirge not sing
 Marriage hymns while Graces add Muses cry
 On their Dear to return brings no reply —

Then suddenly the Universe ceases from grief life's
 tide

Rivers ebb as if Adonis had ne'er been loved or dead
 Year by year far into the past a strange
 Progress across Time's stage this interchange
 Of common life and tragedy Divine
 Yearly a curtain lifts and lo! a line
 Of Beings their beauty wonderful come

From afar. as to their own rightful home.
 Though what is there that might not well have been
 As is acted and painted on the scene?
 Do ye murmur: "Death would have quenched love
 in a Goddess" Nay;
 Love in an Immortal breast would, with death, have
 burned for aye!

More than first thrill ev'n conquest of disdain,
 Wouldst not Thou. Queen Cypris. have prized the
 pain,
 A new sense, the agony in the wood
 Thou roamedst. robe purpled with the dear blood—
 Ecstasy of pure grief—beyond all charms
 In having smiled Adonis to thy arms.
 The feeling that death had sealed him thy own—
 Life half ransomed—ne'er payable the loan!
 So. mayst Thou count the days. our Queen, when Thou
 shalt reap the cost
 And price of kissing Adonis back to be loved—and
 lost!

INNOCENT BOYHOOD

Bism. lily II

With rods a parcel lanced to fish the air
 Picked to match bushes as if they grew there

A youthful fowler had sought out a spot
 Whither were used his winged prey to repair

Kind Chance ! on a box tree in a green grove
 Lo ! one big plump as cooks and sportsmen love !

He mere slip of a boy tri'd all his arts
 The strange fowl's curiosity to move

All in vain So insensible ! and yet
 Handsome ! He threw his rods down in a pet

Fingers itching to feel the creature's throat,
 Should he tangle it in a common net !

Finding an old man who taught him the skill
 He asked him to visit the copse There still

Perched our fine quarry that after one glance
 At graybeard nought vouchsafed for good or ill

Oh !' suggested the countryman Take care
 To give that a wide berth they who wise are

Flee as poison the wicked bird try not
 To catch it, and grown man ev'n more beware !

Now, it affects to despise ; perhaps, may ;
 Sure, if caged, though seeming content to stay,
 It will have the laugh, simple soul, on you.
 And force the barred door open any day.

As it is, thank your stars you are not Man.
 And enjoy your liberty while you can.

You'll know when the reprieve is up, for it
 That shunned pursuit when you, poor child, began,

Will of a sudden either forge or feign
 An invitation, whence procted to gain

 Easy footing upon a silly head,
 And quickly peck out aught there is of brain ! ”

LFD ASTRAY

Bion Idyll III

As I slept Aphrodite leading young
Cupid louting low by her hand along
 Pryed me Dear Herdsman out of love for me
Please teach Baby your pretty trick of song !

That was all and away the Great Queen went
Youth I thinking She a sound training meant,
 Prepared to ground the urchin in my craft
Supposing such was the child's honest bent

So, asleep I showed how quite natural
Twas that Pan Pallas Hermes Phœbus all
 Devised instruments to exalt our Art
Till out of them was born the Pastoral,—

Each being just itself His or Her own
Whether stringed or one way or other blown,
 Cross flute, and nondescript lyre, and guitar,—
Better to me dreaming than waking known.

Pity my pupil listened not —meanwhile
He plotted the inveigling rae to smite
 By humming loose ballads and scandal talk
Graceless Boy ! of his Mother in her Isle

Nor this the worst calamity, to find
That no rudiments had lodged in his mind ;
Or ev'n that mine had lost all it had stored.—
But oh ! the lewd airs there, instead, enshrined !

ON BION

MOSCUS his twin in Bucolic Verse mourns

A joy has faded from off the Earth Fruit
Honey flowers have lost their sweetness mute
Morn's gaudy only birds sing, that bring
A toll of sadness to the sorrowing

HUE AND CRY!

Moschus : Idyll I.

“ ‘ Oyez !

Good People ! Run away !
 Lost at the Three-cross-roads ! a stray !’
 It is my Cupid !

None shall be
 Without a due reward from me.
 For ‘ seeing ’ the Child—Just for this
 A fond Mother offers a kiss !
 But, pray, Sirs, be ye careful what
 Ye look for : Mine’s no common brat ;
 Very notable : take a batch,
 A score ; you would not find his match.
 Complexion ? not your milky-white,
 But as it had drunk red-hot light.
 Keen eyes, gimlets to pierce inside.
 And blaze so ! brain can nothing hide !
 Sweet chatter, with purpose unkind ;
 Likeness none between tongue and -mind.
 Honey even to an excess ;
 After-taste gall and bitterness.—
 For my Babe, it must be confessed,
 In a temper is a wild beast.

Pity too—though can it surprise
 Such sharp wits?—that he's apt at lies
 That sauce goes with his curly hair
 And sports he favours cruel are
 Soft little hands and dimpled each
 That can Styx and King Pluto reach
 Naked Innocent? who has read
 That dark impenetrable head?
 'Boast you're safe as he spends the day
 With a neighbour over the way?
 Delphic bird he and skewers two hearts
 At one sight in several parts
 Yes with bow so small shaft much less
 Yet can wound in the halls of Bliss
 From the gold quiver at his back
 Matricide? gives Mamma the rack
 In a freak of insolent fun
 Fires even the Palace of the Sun
 Now anyone who hears my child
 Is somewhat more than common wild
 Yet would earn a Mother's regard
 And a hope of special reward
 By making little Michael come
 Back to the shelter of a home
 Had best take warning—tie him fast,
 When he drops on the Boy at last
 Cunning young rascal he will try
 To win compassion by some lie—
 Say he was snapt—and I can swear
 Richly deserved it if he were—
 Resort to tears—squeeze out a few—
 Each one a pearl of dawn touched dew—
 Or shoot—a serpent to beguile—

From his artillery a smile :
 Yea, purse a pair of rosy lips
 To kiss —poison to him who sips !
 But suppose miracles—the Brave,
 With captive, trussed fowlwise, to have
 Passed ordeals of kiss, smile, and tear,
 What if my Imp, how like the Dear !
 Should, final stake, as knowing well
 They had been dipped in flame of Hell,
 Pledge to his captor bow and darts—
 With royal patent to break hearts—
 And if, as any, offered this,
 Would accept, and plunge straight in Dis—
 How shall I ever catch, alas !
 Such an Infant as never was ? ”

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

APOLLONIUS was of Alexandria, but passed several years in Rhodes, whence he took a name. He was not of or from Sicily and pretends not to play on Pan's pipes. Working up-hill at first against fashionable literary prejudices in Egypt finally even there he won his way. It was a brave thing to choose a theme which was Pindar's, and he discovered a track without jostling. The Greek masters showed the working of passions chiefly by deeds done. Apollonius so far is modern. He anatomizes his Medea to indicate how The fleece was won. The processes of examining and weighing emotions in a girl's love-stricken heart, though almost cruel are vivid and artistic.

In agreement with the Alexandrian character in Greek literature the main aim was to interest in the mechanism of an individual mind or minds. In earlier Greek that was not the writer's motive though it was an effect. The direct intention was to glorify a hero or a country. If emphasis was laid on special tenets or propensities it was to exalt a God or Goddess. An Alexandrine chose a tradition or adventure as a novelist now because he saw his way to work it into a plot. Apollonius took the Argonauts less on their own account

than for Medea's sake. Aware as he certainly was of the heroic individualities of the men, he had in Colchis no use for them, and for all essential purposes dispenses with all but their chief. Medea is his heroine. His Poem's distinctive merit is the subtlety with which her character develops itself according to the necessities of the story. That is still just so far as his scope requires. It is a most elaborate study of a love-sick girl distracted between affections, duties as she held, originally, to play-mates of her blood, next, to her father, then, after an agonizing struggle, to her love. All through, besides, we have to remember she was, to begin, an unconscious tool in Queen Hera's and Athena's design for the success of the ship. It is a new reading of the future terrible, appalling Enchantress's passions.

The scenic dressing is admirable. Daily life, though without Sicilian shepherds and herdsmen, makes a good background. Nowhere, again, has the Love-God been more charmingly depicted with all his boyish freakishness. Greatness is not after the manner of Apollonius: but there is no better playing at the Epic in miniature. Among votaries of romantic poetry, "The Argonauts" has remained in favour. So fine a student of letters as Charles James Fox loved it.

THE ARGONAUTS

Argonautica III

RHODIAN Apollonius has told
That the Argonauts won the Fleece of Gold
Others had sung already how they fared
In the brave enterprise that Jason dared
Thus Pindar has done it in a great Hymn
Beside which later lights may well burn dim
From a Silver Age and yet he of Rhodes
Has treated subtly passions gusts and gods
Jason had not known at first that the King
So loved the Fleece as to lust for the Thing
That he meant by spells the Sun his Sire taught,
With fresh a youthful daughter's studies wrought,
To pervert a Trust as he feigned to hold
His tenure into lordship of the gold
The wrath he showed warned the crew to beware
Both of rude force and of treacherous snare

Human hearts hide not from Heavenly eyes
Gods saw the King would use craft to surprise
Guideless Heroes only the wiles of love
Could resist enchantments that he might move
Hera and Athena gained the consent
Of Aphrodite Cupid's bow was lent
Almost with gratitude A lively scene
Paints that in the orchard of Zeus the Queen

Of Cyprus found her Boy playing gold dice,
 And cheating Ganymede; how in a trice
 The Babe's last two were added to the rest
 Which Love held in a clenched fist to his breast.
 Sulking at a burst of loud cackle, stole
 Off the ground in dudgeon the spoilt pet fool,
 When Aphrodité entered. As She came,
 A glance, and She caught the trick of Love's game;
 Though the admiring tone in which She cried:
 "Sham, Knave!" savoured less of her wrath than
 pride.

Piously he vowed he'd without delay
 Inflame a maid; for him a holiday,
 With, or without the promise of a ball—
 "Plaything of boy Zeus; pictures over all;
 For flight, would mount up, up, ever so far,
 I'd be thought to have got hold of a star!"
 Better, he pleads, give now; "touch of the prize
 Would surely have made gimlets of his eyes.
 But sooner off, sooner back"; so, arrayed
 With quiver and bow, in hot haste he made,
 Having free exit and entrance by birth,
 Instant plunge through Heaven's gates upon Earth.

No grander Palace than Aia's; a God.
 Hephæstus, built it, fair and strong abode
 For the son of Helios, to requite
 The cripple's rescue from a Giant's might.
 A garden bloomed outside, with promise large
 Of grapes and flowers; and along its marge
 Babbled from founts that severally rolled,
 Warm as the Pleiads set, as they rose, cold,
 Jets, milk, wine, water, sweet oil, wondrous art,
 Though not more than o'erflowed every part.
 Round an inner Court lofty buildings stood,

Lodgings for a proud King and Royal blood
 With slaves many Ecetes dwelt in one
 And his Queen, in another next his son
 Apsvrtus Others housed Chalciope
 With her sons by Phryxus returned from sea
 And Medea—of such awe for her Siring
 That few marked charms though human half Divine!
 Scarcely herself conscious From when rose the sun
 She served Hekate till day's course was run
 Only now Hera stayed her for the Plot's sake
 That Cupid's arrow might its due course take

Already Jason, holding in his hand
 Pledge of his amity, a Herald's wand
 Attended with five more prepared to meet
 And settle points at issue without heat
 To avoid street encounters Hera cast
 A thick mist over the route as the Greeks passed,
 But it cleared

As Cupid brushed through the crowd
 Breasts panted eyes glamed women sighed aloud
 Twisting in close by Jason on the string
 Tight strained he fitted a shaft On the wing
 It whirred, and with a jeer and laugh pleased well—
 Though the rights of his work he could not tell—
 At the girl's dumb surprise the Imp fell back
 From Hall and throng leaving her on the rack
 He had performed his task earned his reward
 So he handled the plaything nought he cared
 Jason begged the Fleece as Greek The King must
 In conscience keep bound by a sacred Trust

Yoke the Bulls, face the Dragon take the Fleece
 And restore it triumphantly to Crete!
 Thwart his magic? Perhaps But Medea? How
 suppose

His Medea's a weapon of his foes ?

Yes ; the arrow—a flame—clove the Maid's heart—
 The melting, vibrating, bitter, sweet smart !
 A scamstress lets one spark touch ; due delay—
 Fire will warm her to work by break of day—
 And the heaped brushwood is a blaze ! So, now,
 A pure, virgin soul changed to red-hot tow.
 Nor knew she to what lengths the fire might spread.
 She loved ; not cause enough therein for dread ?
 Enough of pain, glancing beside her veil,
 To count the beatings of her heart, to feel
 Herself in bonds, a drawn, flickering shade,
 Obligated to tread one track, each footstep made ?
 Knowing her Sire's fury at the demand
 For return of the Fleece to its own land,
 She sought the Women's quarters with the rest.
 The longing swelled, with absence, in her breast.
 Agony—how be sure fancy saw true ?
 That memory indeed gave him to view.
 Recalled how he rose, and resumed his seat,
 Attuned the words he uttered, honey-sweet ?
 Pride to love such ! But the pits in his path ;
 Deadliest dug by the King's subtle wrath !
 Thinking, she grieved as for one on his bier ;
 And down a cheek rolled an eloquent tear.
 Cruel the contest that she had to wage,
 Girlish shame at an all unsought love's rage.
 Worn out at last she slept, and a kind dream
 Bade believe Jason had not, as would seem.
 Voyaged to regain the Fleece, but was come
 To woo her to reign, Queen, with him at home.

Into warm cloth for men, delicate gauze for women's
wear

I rejoice that you whom choice craftsmen of Sicily
wrought,
Will serve folk, not pithless and idle, but of nerve and
thought;

That, as your lot was to exchange the country of your
birth,

It is to a City as pleasant as there is on Earth.

I shall muse on you, when I drift, the sport of any
wind,

As housing with a good and wise healer of human-kind;
Nor then only, but when the sun sets, and night closes
in,

And you, with sweet Theugets, your course of eve
begin.

Perhaps, it will chance that She may bethink her of a
song,

Even of its Minstrel, as the melody rolls along.

Although wild waters roar between us, I shall see and
hear,

As her eyes fall on my poor Gift, wet, may be, with one
tear.

Gifts, and Gifts! some worthless; some, that a life
cannot repay!

And the measure? In Heav'n or Hell alone the scales
to weigh!

DAPHNIS AND MENALCAS

IDYLL IX

PEASANT

'DRIVE, Boys, the cattle to their pasture see they
 graze
 The boselage together not their several ways
 Now, do not you feel in your throats the prick of
 Spring,
 That the air is music? Breathe on your pipes, and
 sing
 Daphnis you lead off on some rustic theme, and try
 To play as you feel and Menalcas shall reply

DAPHNIS

Hark! a calf lows and a heifer responds and
 there
 The beauty is for me that nought is strange or rare
 To us plain countrymen Nature's marvel is She
 Endows with charm the fitness of all things that be
 And our pipings if rude are innocent and sweet
 For they are echoes, and but reflect and repeat
 Nature how kind both in toil and in rest! I lead
 My herd to pasture whether in glade or on mead
 Then seek work done the shaded margin of a stream

Having not half run her course ere sun light.
 The pair woke: want and toil. loud watchmen,
 stirred
 Their eyelids earlier than the first bird.
 Yet innocent they as flow'rs a bee sips.
 And ceased from sleep a song upon their lips.

ASPHALION.

"They were liars. Friend. that were wont to say
 Zeus takes from summer nights to add to day.
 This night, and not yet near dawn, I have seen
 Ten thousand dreams! what. Heavens! can it mean?
 Is it I that hasten, too fast to count,
 Passing hours, or is the sun slow to mount.
 And bids the night 'mark time.' until he find
 Fuel to start his car, and wake mankind?"

CO-IRADE.

"Summer, Asphaltion. runs its full course.
 If there be default, our old foe's the source.
 Accuse not night of stealing hours from light.
 Poverty, its ears. are the thieves. not night."

ASPHALION.

"You: can you read dreams—have learnt to divine?
 If so, pray, listen. and interpret mine.
 It sounds good; and we partners on the deep,
 Must share, if good there be, my luck in sleep.
 So, as 'tis a joint concern, and, 'tis said.
 The prime dream-reader is the wisest head—
 Which is yours—please. advise me for the best.
 When you hear my story. you can suggest.

Talk at least is better than to wait morn
On leaves with to every one a thorn
Direary vigils when one cannot afford
Candles against the Dark as Town Hall lord
Whose minutes, night is morn are worth in pay
Ever so much beyond ours work or play

COMRADE

At all events times cheap I do not grudge
Use of my ears Tell the dream I'll judge

ASPHALTON

Towards evening I fell fast asleep I was not
Drowsiness from overeating You wot
We dined early and did not overload
Our stomachs—for good reason—with much food
I found myself on a rock As I shook
My line with the bait wriggling on the hook
A well nourished alderman of the deep
Took the worm for as dogs crusts so in sleep
Fishermen can dream a bite I dreamt mine
And felt my hurt spoil straining rod and line
Knowing the hooks weak I stretched both hands out
Wrestling to grasp the monster round about
Then, feigning he harboured reveng I cried
You would fight? and my rod struck at his side
Here the struggle ended I hauled shore
A Golden Fish all covered thickly o'er
With scales of gold! Ah! joy! though to begin
A shadow haunted me of mortal sin
What if pet of Poseidon's my own lord?
Or special gem in Amphitrite's hoard?

Howbeit, gently loosened I the hold
 Of the greedy hooks on my precious gold :
 Then, tugged by ropes the creature up the shore ;
 And, calling all the Gods to witness, swore
 That never would I tempt the sea again.
 But turn Gold-king, and on dry land remain !

On that I woke.

To starve : and keep my vow ?
 Forswear : be damned ?

Say, which. I bow."

COMRADE

" ' You ' neither caught the fish, nor swore the oath.
 No need to be alarmed ; illusions both ;—
 Like most dreams—though we may dream open eyes.
 Your dream-rook a likely place ? Hope no prize :
 But search for catch to eat.

To starve your wish ?
 Sleep, dream, in work-hours, and hook golden fish ! "

AN IVORY DISTAFF

Idyll XXVIII

Just a distaff! Athens boon to women And I
 would
 Mine to Thaugenis in Miktus might prove as good!
 I have a Bard's second sight you shall see you need
 not fear
 Distaff to fare less gently in your treatment there than
 here
 Lo! your new mistress before a green tender reed
 wreathed Shrine
 In stately Miktus praying the Queen of Love Divine
 To calm the seas for one bound from Syracuse to
 embrace
 Nicias scion and heir of each harmonious Greece
 Next yourself—envy I not clasped by two white arms
 and kissed
 By rosy lips?—was ever distaff as you so blest?—
 Yes and joy again as amid her troop of laughing
 girls
 Pressed by your Lady's dainty ankle your wheel
 whirling twirl
 Turning the soft fleeces from the ewes twice shorn, year
 by year

Of envy, jealousy, pride, greed, and lust
 Swept the "King" away : "Kalahas ! scheming foe,
 Prophet never of good to me, but woe !
 And whence, tell me, if I shall now resign
 A prize to cure the plague, is to come mine ? "
 "From Troy," Achilles answered : "meantime wait."
 ' Nay : but now ! So, as stirred somehow, debate
 Throws the task on me as 'King' to allay
 The God's anger roused in whatever way,
 I restore the Maid ; and thou may'st surmise
 At leisure, how I shall replace my Prize ! "

"Menaces !" cried Achilles : "I no more
 Fight for you Atreida—wage your own war ! "

' Stay, or Go ! " the answer, " for thee to choose,
 If away, not I will it be who lose.
 Of all our Princes here, thou with thy erst
 Temper art the one that I like the worst.
 But a last visit I shall pay to show,
 Which, Thou or I, is stronger of the two."

Achilles was in two moods : to snatch out
 His sword, the Princes gone : or—this his doubt—
 Let time avenge him. His heart ached between :
 When down came Athena, sent by the Queen,
 Standing behind him seen by none else there
 She caught hold of him by the golden hair ;
 Promised amends ; but, " let him rage in word
 To its utmost fury ; he speech his sword."
 Obeying, he thrust back the blade ; then flung
 All epithets left in him, with free tongue :
 " Wine-bibber, money-grubber, with one eye
 On look-out for offal, stag's heart to flee,
 Spoil-sneaker, when more valiant men have bled,
 Master who grinds his People's bones for bread !

Thou canst seize my Prize What an Army gave
Its Chief may resume But pray me to save
When Hector drives and slays? Thus roth I swear,
Shall sooner as unkind and green leaves bear
Than in thy distress will I bring relief
To thy Achæans in their day of grief!

Chryseis was restored and her old sire
Prevailed on Phœbus to forgive his ire
But to knowledge of the Greek camp repent
Threats! would shame its General so he sent
For Briseis—an outrage working worse
Ill to all than the plague from the Priest's curse
'Unwilling she' mute her lord saw her part
Afraid a farewell would lay bare a heart
Yet she had her share when 'in tears' he sat
On the beach not alone but desolate
For his Mother Thetis hearing him weep
Had risen a mist from the hoary deep
To comfort in his wrongs and had assured
Him vengeance for all that he had endured
"Wait, and Zeus would lay on the Greeks the cost
Of their choice of Captain to lead their host
That Sovereign himself should be taught to pay
Respect to the bravest in his array"

HELEN ON THE WALLS

An armistice was proclaimed : Troy and Greece
 Chose Elders to formulate terms of peace.
 Busy Rumour ran through the Field, the Town ;
 Priam from Ihan's ramparts looked down.
 Helen, at home, alone ignorant, safe.
 'Mid whispering maidens, musing on fate.
 To her Iris, from Hera, Heaven's Queen.
 As Laodice, to lead her to the scene :
 " Haste, sweet one doings wonderful to see.
 Preparing by Greeks and Trojans, for thee ;
 Both Armies, with their shields and spears, are there ;
 But not, as their wont is, to pierce hearts here.
 At present, while their chosen Chiefs define
 Rules of combat, the rank and file recline.
 Quick come ! Is not the question in all eyes—
 Menelaus fights Paris !—where the Prize !

Yearning for husband, home and parents, stole,
 Sweet regret, sent from Hera, on her soul ;
 A few soft tears ; then, all in white arrayed,
 On either side attended by a maid—
 Æthra, Klymena—she left bow'r and hall ;
 And from the gates ascended to the wall.

In the gateway tower King Priam sate.
 With Elders, courtiers, pillars of the State,
 Iketaon, son of Ares, Panthous,

Lampus and Thymætus, and Klytus
 And he had summoned too Ukalegon,
 And wise Antenor, Evetes son—
 Though age forbade the Field in speech both good—
 As cicadas shrill bravely in a wood—
 When Helen came

No wonder that such charm
 As this, they whispered ' has wrought deadly harm
 To Trojans and Argives ' How to resist ?
 Could Beauty more dazzling in Heaven exist ?
 But at what cost ? Return her whence she came,
 Or keep to be hums curse and shame !

More graciously the King Let her be sure
 We deem her guiltless if Troy must endure
 Blame the Gods as for tears They made them flow
 ' Sit, dear Child and name those you see below
 First, who that Captain—starchest in mien ?
 Though others may be taller none have I seen
 So majestic not one like to him made
 Lordly—not kingly—used to be obeyed ! '

She passed to please him the Chiefs in review
 ' The King's instinct for Kings she said is true,
 'Tis Agamemnon's self, swordsman as tried
 In fight as is the realm he governs wide
 My brother once and he proud of the clam
 Can I and that woman be still the same ! '

Atrides, right blest Priam cried by Fate,
 With this host to pay homage to thy State !
 I remember long since chanced I to behold
 In Phrygia famed for vineyards and gold
 How Otres and Mygdon arrayed their ranks
 Of horsemen upon Sangarius banks
 The ardour of youth drove me to engage

18 GREEK AND LATIN ANTHOLOGY

In a war they massed their whole strength to wage
 With the Amazons. Theirs could not compare
 With these legions: yet myriads they were!"

"But he, who if not as Atreides tall,
 Stands, for shoulders, and deep chest, first of all?
 Though 'tis truee, and his arms lie on the ground,
 He is never off guard, ranges around
 His men's lines—masterful, as when one views
 A ram ordering flock of white-fleeced ewes."

"'Tis Odysseus," said she; "of a rough isle;
 Country-bred but versed in many a wile,
 All sorts of entangling counsels: not one
 Greek is a match for Laertes' wise son!"

Old Antenor capped her praise with his own:

'Yea Lady; I too have Odysseus known.

Menelaus and he, when they arrived

To discuss matters concerning Thee, lived

Under my roof; as host and friend. I sought

To test and discern how each felt and thought.

Menelaus was tall; standing, he rose

Above the crowd; the other, in repose,

Sat higher; so in speech: clear as a bird

The Spartan; though not full, missing no word;

By that he had, that lacked he, it was plain

That he must be the younger of the twain.

Nought Odysseus possessed of grace, or ease;

Praetised no arts to captivate or please;

Bolt upright he stood; eyes fixed on the ground,

But with an underlook, spying around;

Sceptre in both hands, fast-clutched stiff and straight,

Not used to emphasize, extenuate:

Wooden figure, unpolished, shy, and dour,

As if resenting his dull wits; a boor!

Then, hark to the great voice out of vast breast,
 Words, floating snowflakes one by one, to rest!
 We minded no longer postures or air,
 Lord of debate, speaker beyond compare!"

As still the King gazed, one came from among
 His fellow princes, overlooking the throng
 By head and broad shoulders 'twas a delight
 To veteran Priam so brave a sight
 "His name?" "Big Ajax" the reply "a foe
 Must raze that bulwark ere Greece suffer woe
 Note too where Idomeneus beside him stands—
 As with Cretan neighbours giving commands—
 Revered like a God his wont was to come
 And be entertained by us at our home
 In Lacedæmon with more that I see
 And could if time there were name King to
 thee."

But as those starry eyes marked Chief by Chief,
 Each form recognized started a fresh grief
 She felt wherever her life took its way
 Her beauty shed poison by night and day
 A Pest she a Fury

"Loved Sire and Lord
 Thy goodness crushes me each tender word!
 Ah! that I did not woo Death to my arms
 Rather than follow thy son's fatal charms
 Forsaking kinsmen and my bridal bed
 The sweet girl friend amid whom I was bred
 And Her, sole daughter mine!"

Had life but run

As in fair Lacedæmon 'twas begun!
 Even now know not I too well why in vain
 I search all Argive groups upon the plain

For my twin-brothers?—

If they never sailed
From Aulis, or, coming hither, have failed
To-day's conclave—the Cause I!—

How proclaim
Themselves of my blood! Me their Sister! Me their
Shame!”

Wouldst happier have been, Lady, hadst known
They lived not on strange soil, or on their own?

HECTOR, ANDROMACHE

HEARING that his wife sought him Hector went
Towards the wall awaiting her descent
She a life parted between hope and dread
To hail him victor or to mourn him dead,
Now breathless, running a course against Fate,
Beheld him standing by the Skenan Gate

A desperate hazard hers--woman's charms
Against a devilry of blood and arms !
Yet the prize ! three lives if love's fine art
Could from a furnace snatch a soldier's heart !
True not on form alone and soul is high,
Did the brave lady in her need rely
To fortify each sorrowful appeal
Each source of mutual kindness unseal
A maiden of her household held the boy,
Whom, a radiant star the hope of Troy
Hector had at birth Skamandrios named,
But the city with one accord acclaimed
' Astyanax, his heir whom it adored
Him its counsellor its shield and sword

Hector guessing at the fond mission smiled,
Silent as they approached upon his Child
Then She as tears ran down each lovely cheek
With in both hands, her courage dared to speak

' Forgive,' she cried ' my Own when now I stay
Thine battle bound 'tis for my life I pray,

And for this innocent's ; all life can give
 Depends for us whether Thou choose to live.
 No common chance of war threatens Thee now ;
 Challenged to the field. full too well I know
 Thy hot blood reeks little that man to man
 Greeks dare not meet my Hector ; no, they plan
 To swarm about Thee single—like a pack
 Of wolves on a boar. to hustle and hack !
 If for Thyself Thou wilt not. canst not. care,
 Look on Us twain and pity my despair.
 The joy and frenzy of the fight for Thee ;
 An orphan's lot Thy Babe's. and worse for me !
 Thy feet run straight tow'ards death ; and Oh ! that
 mine,

Ere Thou hast touched the goal, might outpace Thine !

Rememberest Thou Her whom on the side
 Of Platos once Thou wooedst for Thy Bride ?
 A maid within a ninefold fence of love—
 Mother and Sire revered as Gods above,
 And Brethren in their citadel of stone
 Impregnable by warrior, save One—
 And the One came, by his birth half Divine,
 His breath Death's blast on Eëtion's line.
 Cilician Thebes. despite gates and walls,
 He stormed, and left a waste—temples and halls—
 On the same day my seven brothers slew,
 And firing their palace insolently threw
 Their bodies in the flames. to swell a heap
 Of butchered oxen. and of white-fleeced sheep.
 Eëtion full of years. brave. and good,
 He would not mingle with the common crowd,
 Such as he, though carnage-drunk, know sacred
 things ;

A King's son honours blood of reigning Kings
 Clad in his dazzling armour died my Sire
 And round him thus arrayed flamed high his pyre
 Armed lie his ashes their own monument
 And Nymphs of the hills chanting their lament
 Have wreathed the spot with elms their cypress leaf,
 Swaving in the breeze voices the land's grief
 My Mother, Queen enslaved her captor brought
 To the Greek camp and thence her Father bought
 Her from bonds at once and life for a dart
 From Dian's bow heals even a broken heart

My family destroyed by fire and sword—
 How can I bear the ruin to record?
 'Tis that a present happiness had eist
 A kindly shadow o'er a cruel past
 The ache was charmed from ranking memories
 By traversing an atmosphere of bliss
 Till now poor orphan and fond fool I thought
 She who has Hector can have missed of nought
 Alas for Me! that Thou my One and All
 Leave'st me desolate at a bugle's call!
 Nay, bethink Thee Ilum's Warder whose
 But Thine the How and Where the fight to choose?
 Are there not legends prophecies that tell
 Our walls though God are not impregnable?
 The wild fig tree? Is not Troy bid beware
 Of the spot it springs from—a weak point there?
 Already Achæans spy out a fault
 And weigh the chances of a prompt assault
 Is not the tower spot to watch and man
 Defy the foe to enter if he can?'

"Thou wouldst not have thy Hector, sweet my Wife
 Value his fame so low, so high his life,

As to refuse a challenge to the fight
 From all Achæa in its utmost might !
 Is it for Ilium's champion to call
 On towers to screen, skulk behind a wall ?
 How could I face my warriors' surprise,
 Or meet the doubt within a woman's eyes ?
 Impossible spirit like mine to tame,
 Bid it buy length of days at cost of shame !
 Long since I learnt, and never will unlearn,
 To be worthy through and through, never turn ;
 Ever, when fight Troy must, to fight in front,
 In this mould Nature cast me : thus I count
 To earn my sire renown : and, by the way,
 Store some for myself—while it yet is Day !

For well I know our doom ; foresee the whole
 Down to the inmost fibre of my soul :
 How God-built Ilium, with King and host,
 Must flit away, shadowy as a ghost,
 Deem not, my Wife, I lightly rate thy woes
 When Troy shall sink as swiftly as it rose,
 Rather 'tis I forgiveness need, I know,
 By him to whom we faith and homage owe,
 Priam, and by Hecuba, Mother dear,
 Her whom beyond all mortals I revere,
 And by a band of brothers true and brave,
 Whom—and how gladly—I would die to save !
 My heart should ache at thought of kindred blood
 Running down Ilium's pavement, a flood,
 Dragged by the hair high ladies in the street,
 Dead princes spurned by vile Achæan feet—
 But 'tis with grief as joy : in dire distress
 Great agony will swallow up the less ;
 I have no heart for grief but Thine alone,

When Ilum has fallen and I gone

A vision haunts me day and night—I see
Thee led a slave and weeping bitterly,
Thy heart will groan as mine for Thee—no cure—
What must be must be, learn then to endure
Nought boots it to protest against thy doom
Whether it be to ply a stranger's loom
Or as thou drawest from in Argive wall
When women view thy tears to hear one tell
'Lo! Hector's wife! and deeper sighs will tear
Thy breast to feel as fresh I am not there
For earth must lie on me heavy and deep
Fre hand be laid on Thee to make Thee weep!'

Then, arms stretched forth the Father turned his face,
For his Child to spring to the dear embrace
Back from the menace of the waving crest
Shuddered the Babe upon his Nurse's breast!
The Parents laughed and Hector straight unlaced
The martial terror from his brow and placed
It empty gleaming in the sunshine then
With many a kiss and caress again
Sued for an infant's ecstacy of love—
Less vainly than alas! to Heaven above
To father his orphan

O Gods endow

This babe with any powers I owned below
On his behalf be guardians of the Crown
I should have worn and grant him my renown—
Only doubled so that the words shall run—
'Glorious Father more glorious Son!
And let this be for him the crowning joy
In every triumph he wins for Troy

To assure his Mother he counts her pride
In Hector's son with a world's praise beside!"

Hearing the pray'r, the Mother wept and smiled,
As to her breast, a rose, she took their child.

He read her tears, and answer to them made:

"Partner of my soul! be not thou afraid!

No more than cowardice can add a day.

Will hardihood snatch one of mine away.

Nor Good nor Ill has ever changed a span

Of men's existence since the world began.

The Fates determine Life and Death, and mete

The labour for which each that breathes is fit.

Us men the ruder tasks of earth become;

'Tis Thine, my Queen, to stay and rule at home:

War ours—ours of Ilium most of all;

Dearest, rejoice that I obey the call!"

Donning his crested helmet, forth he bent

His steps to the battlefield; home she went.

With many backward looks, shedding big tears.

Arrived, she told the parting, and her fears

Thereon throughout the palace swept a tide

Of wailing, as for a Lord who had died.

FIGHT RESUMED

Agamemnon sends envoys to beg in vain a reconciliation of Achilles

They found Achilles in his spacious tent
Drawing forth clear sweet music as he bent
From a lyre with cross bar of silver wrought
Exquisitely that from the spoils he brought
Of Eetion's home As the strings rung
His throat answered to the notes and he sang
Of Heroes' glories in an elder age
Rapt, and forgetful even of his rage

Agamemnon's petition having been refused Greece and Troy fought with alternate success Zeus interposed according to his agreement with Thetis and Hector even threatens to burn the Fleet Ajax all but slays him by a huge stone, but Apollo cures him The Fleet is in peril

For the long protracted struggle upon the Trojan shore
Whether the Greek Fleet were to be condemned to sail
no more

Was only a duel between a champion on the spot,
And one who although wuting the issue hard by was not
Indulgent to Thetis Zeus had engaged that Troy should win
On a bloody battlefield that even fire should begin
To catch the Fleet till redress for her Son's wrongs had
been paid,

And the Argives confessed their host were lost without
his aid,

Zeus too, knew Hector destined to be short-lived; he
should have

Brave and glorious days, if few, before he reached his grave.
Thus, from either side—for Achilles, or for Hector—Zeus,
Equally biassed, had sufficient reason or excuse
To continue Troy's turn of victory. However fierce
Stand of a phalanx, elsewhere lines were easier to pierce.
Avoiding serried tiers, a locked square of brass. Hector fell
On the ill-armed masses by the shore; scattered them
pell-mell.

No choice longer had the Invincibles but to retreat;
The whole Greek Army, forced now as it was, faced now
the Fleet.

Ebb or flow, a tide may be made to appear to forget
Through a sudden gust of wind, or landwards, or sea-
wards set,

Its due direction for an instant's waywardness; but soon
It resumes the prescriptive movement ordered by the
moon.

Some Hero might have inspired the Hellenic rank and file
To stand and beat the Trojans and their Allies back
awhile;

Then Zeus would look from Ida down, and Fortune
once more turn,

As if pledging herself to Hector that the Ships should burn.
Already on foot the Trojans had passed beyond the fosse.
Warned by Polydamas, the Cars did not attempt to cross,
Fearing sharp stakes beneath; but the Army of all
grades made

A long assault on the rampart by way of escalade.
Sarpedon was the first to obtain foothold on the wall,
He caught at a feeble buttress, and shook it to a fall.

Other agile climbers followed On it a confused crowd,
Achæans, Trojans jostling one another mixed their blood
Hector finally, impatient, heaved up a stone of weight
Beyond present Men's strength had not Zeus chosen to
 turn it light—

One of a number lying about a large scattered store
To prop the Greek ships drawn up by the Army from
 the shore

He cast it at the locked gate the sudden tremendous
 stroke

Nought of human workmanship could stand, bars and
 langes broke

Everywhere, he seemed impossible to bar like Night
The defenders he drove towards the Fleet in headlong
 flight

None living but Beings Divine could then have blocked
 his path

His eyes blazed they burned like fire he was a Spirit
 of Wrath!

For Hector was inspired by Zeus to attack and destroy
both the Barrier between Troy and Fleet and the Fleet
itself Apollo at times would shake Hisegis

So long as he held it rigid brandished not forth its
 force

Men fought died fortune kept an even homicidal
 course

But when looking Greeks full in the faces he tossed
The weird fringe, each tassel as alive at the close-
 massed host

And flung over the battlefield his paralyzing shout,
All manliness forsook the Greeks retreat became a rout